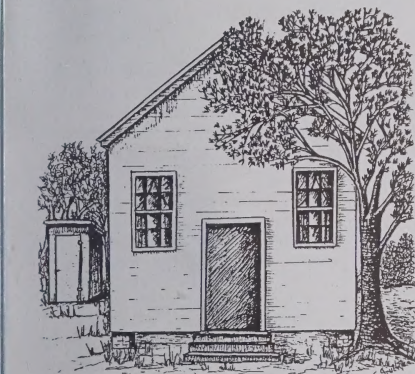


THE MAILBOAT



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A typical "one-room schoolhouse" -- found throughout the communities of Carteret County and other rural areas around the turn of the century. (Sketch from *Island Born & Bred*, by Shirley Irvine.)

Education in Carteret County

Education came to Carteret County in much the same way as other steps to progress have come ... through the visions of men and women who recognized the need for a NEW way. The process was not easy for anyone living in the late 1800's, but for those who made their homes on the creeks and marshes of rural Carteret the challenge was especially hard.

In Beaufort and Morehead, communication and transportation advantages brought educational opportunities much closer to the children of the families living "in town." Though their obstacles were many, the larger population itself brought more resources and possibilities their way. Churches established such facilities as St. Paul's Academy, recognized far and near for its excellent academic program. This school drew children from across the county who traveled to the mainland and boarded with family members or town's people to take advantage of the chance for an education.

However, for the children living in such communities as Lukens, Harlowe, Diamond City, Hog Island, Portsmouth, Atlantic, Marshallberg, and all the other small family-congregations along the water-ways and farmlands, the advantage of a consistent education program were much harder to accomplish. Their determination to learn was met with the dedication of teachers who "came from off." Together, in spite of innumerable difficulties facing them, they accomplished much toward a foundation in the basic skills and an exposure to the "extra's" such as art, music, and theater. This "beginning" many times perpetuated in students becoming teachers themselves and returning to their home communities to carry on the process of education.

Our collection of stories in this edition of *The Mailboat* brings only a sampling of the stories of communities and individuals and their roles in making "school" a reality of our forebears. (Our Spring edition will include articles on Portsmouth, Hog Island, Marshallberg, and others.) Here again, we will extend these stories into future issues as the response and interest to these accounts exceeded our space to include them. After reading these recollections, we invite you to share your "school days" with other *Mailboat* readers.

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Dear "Mailboat",

Thank you so much for sending me *The Mailboat*. I have read every word and loved every page. What was it Eddie Hill wrote, "You can take the boy out of Down East, but you can never take the "Down East" out of the Boy." How true this is! In 1957 when I told my Dad (Charles Salter, Bettie) that I was moving to California, he said, "Go ahead, but part of your heart will remain here." How right he was!

Thanks again.

Clarence Salter

Garden Grove, California



The "Ocracoke," mailboat to Ocracoke, was purchased by Dr. William Farmer in 1953. On last account the "Ocracoke" was owned by a retired Army Sergeant and headed for Panama. Anyone having any further information, please contact *The Mailboat*. Photo courtesy of Louisa Farmer McLeod-Reaves, daughter of Dr. William Farmer.

Dear Mailboat,

I am writing to thank you for sending me *The Mailboat*. The memories began to flood back into my mind and I laid back in my recliner to daydream of the good times I had spent in the coastal area.

I was among some of the first U. S. Marines to be stationed at the Cherry Point Air Station. It was called Cunningham Field then. Construction was going on everywhere and the main gate consisted of a sentry box with a saw-horse road block. A locomotive named "Goldsboro" was parked on a railroad spur to supply steam heat for the completed buildings. To go on liberty to New Bern one would catch an old school bus — "Pop's Bus" — that did not have regular seats, but did have boards mounted along the inside walls to sit upon. A round-trip cost twenty-five cents, and one hoped that it never broke down. I remember one trip back the wiring to the headlights caught on fire causing a complete blackout. We sat there all night — swatting mosquitoes — as we waited for dawn to continue our trip.

New Bern was a most friendly town to the Servicemen and I believe that I walked along every street in town at that time. The USO and the large old church in the center of town saw that we were well taken care of. People often invited me into their homes for meals, card games, and conversation. They were as curious as to where we came from and our ways as we were of theirs. And we did encounter new things. I had never seen a Dr. Pepper or a Moon Pie. The first time I was ever served a hamburger was at the small restaurant near the River Bridge and it had mustard on it — and was delicious. To an eighteen year old who was raised in the northern mountains, to have been transferred to an alien environment such as this was a most rewarding experience.

I "thumbed" a ride to Morehead City twice during my first tour of duty at Cherry Point. It was much more reserved than New Bern so I would walk around the town and watch the fishing boats come into the piers and unload baskets of shrimp and fish. The porpoise and sea gulls would follow the fishing boats right into the inlets as the fishermen culled their catch. I was always fascinated by this and the people who processed the fish in the long dark sheds at the pier's end. I have stood for hours

watching this scene, even though I am a person not fond of seafood.

On one of my trips I was fortunate to see the train creep slowly through the center of town. The engineer was familiar with many of the residents as greetings were exchanged back and forth. As an "outsider" I did have a slight problem with the brogue of the local citizens, but one soon learned what "right much" and other terms meant.

In 1952 I married and visited some old friends in Havelock on our honeymoon. Havelock at that time had progressed from a "spot on the road" to a "small intersection" that had experienced growing pains. Several trips were made to Atlantic Beach where we played in the surf on an almost deserted beach, cooked hot dogs over a driftwood fire, and sat well into the night listening to the sounds of the sea. My wife was fascinated by the fact that she could walk a short distance and pick up a double hand-full of sea shells, sand dollars, and more. It was a wild, lonely place, where one felt next to God and nature out there under the billowing sky and breeze.

During the past few years I have returned to Atlantic Beach several times to walk on the sand and feel the sun and wind on my face once again. The peace, calm, and isolation has disappeared and in its place are telephone poles sunk in the sand with all manner of buildings resting upon them. The beaches are now empty of the things I remember — no driftwood or sea shells, but I did see pieces of old rope, plastic bottles, and an old tire sunk in the sand. It is still a restful retreat though, when you close your mind to all but the sea, sun, and wind as you look out over the water. Then you turn around to look for the sand dunes you once had to walk over to get to your car — and you are back in today's world.

I shall return though to look at the sea, walk in the surf, and to feel the sun and wind. For I am still a stranger in another person's home place and as a guest I shall leave it as I found it. Time may change the face of things, but the good memories shall always remain ...

Edward Donnelly
Middleton, Tennessee

The Mailboat of Atlantic Beach

James Newman Willis III ("Cap'n Jim")

Did you ever catch the mailboat to Atlantic Beach? Well I did! Some of you probably think that I'm pulling your leg; others may think that I actually meant to say "Atlantic" instead of "Atlantic Beach" (because Atlantic Beach has always had a bridge) and the rest of you know that I've completely lost what little sense I ever had. Sorry folks, but you're all wrong. It's true! For one glorious week in the fall of 1948 we had our own "MAILBOAT" to Atlantic Beach.

I should know, since from 1936 to 1955 the post office on Atlantic Beach was a fourth class office and was my family's responsibility. Although my father was the postmaster from 1936-1951 and my mother from 1952-1972, the operation of the office, as long as it was the little rural fourth class office, was the job of the whole family. When the post office first opened in 1936, my Daddy's sister, Reba Baker, actually ran the day-to-day operation of the office, since my father had too many other duties in his job with the main beach management to allow him to stay in the post office full-time. Later on, my Daddy's cousin and my Mother's sister also were clerks in this office. In 1948, my mother had the job of clerk. One of the main family responsibilities was getting the mail to and from Morehead City. In the summer months, when the Beach was in full swing, the mail was usually hauled by whoever carried the workers on the main beach back and forth from Morehead. But, from the first day of May until Memorial Day and from Labor Day until the last day of September, the job became Daddy's. (In those days the Beach post office was seasonal and was open only from May 1 through September 30.)

In the early morning hours of September 22, a tug, with a barge in tow, approached the Atlantic Beach Bridge from the west. As it made the turn toward the southeast near 30th Street in Morehead, the helmsman turned just a little too far south.

So, in that fateful fall of 1948, Daddy had the job of getting the incoming mail from Morehead to the Beach and the outgoing mail from the Beach to Morehead, not once but twice each day. He would usually leave for Morehead to pick up the first mail around 7:45 in the morning. I would usually ride over to school in Morehead with him, since I was too lazy to get up in time enough to catch the bus. I can remember getting up on the morning of Wednesday, September 22, 1948, and the lights were off. Pretty soon Daddy came in and told us that a barge

had broken loose from a tug that night and torn away a large section of the beach bridge. I was so sad at the prospect of not being able to get to school that day or maybe even the next day ... cause you just know I was dying to get there!?) But the MAIL MUST GO THROUGH!

The details of the disaster are as follows. In the early morning hours of September 22, a tug, with a barge in tow, approached the Atlantic Beach Bridge from the west. As it made the turn toward the southeast near 30th Street in Morehead, the helmsman turned just a little too far south. As the two vessels approached the bridge, he realized that the approach was too far south and attempted to correct the course by turning the tug hard to port. This maneuver put too much strain on the bridle line to the barge and it snapped causing the tug to swing sideways to the bridge. The barge continued on its southward course, smashing into the bridge and sending about 125 feet on the roadspan on the south side of the channel tumbling into Bogue Sound. Of course, this little incident took out the lights, since the power lines to the Beach were strung on poles parallel to the bridge about 50 feet on the west side, and they too were knocked out. Fortunately no one was hurt in this accident, and the drawbridge remained intact.

The bridge tender notified his superiors as soon as he could, and by daybreak the State (the State Highway and Public Works Commission now known as the Department of Transportation) was on the scene with amazing speed for that time and era. Realizing that a major traffic artery had been severed and that the "mail must go through," they immediately hired a boat to ferry mail, passengers, and other goods across the damaged span, and we got our first and only MAILBOAT. The boat came over from Morehead City. She was owned by Capt. Tony Seamon of the Sanitary Fish Market and Restaurant and skippered by Capt. Theodore Lewis. Her name was the "Sylvia."

As soon as he was able to get across, Daddy crossed over to Morehead to get the mail. It had been delayed long enough. I talked my parents out of going to school the first day, but on Thursday I was not so successful. So, off to the bridge we went. Daddy drove out onto the bridge as far as he could go and parked. We got out and walked over to the edge of the bridge. I remember that part of the bridge railing had been removed and a ladder had been nailed onto the bridge and extended to a platform below. (I can't remember if the platform was a floating scow or was just fastened onto the bridge itself.) As I stared into the chasm below (it must have been at least 20 feet down to the water), I got "giddy-headed" from the view. I quickly told Daddy that there was no way I could climb down that ladder and survive. So, he let me stay on the beach side, and I had another day free of school. This ploy lasted until the weekend, but then they built a little stairway with railings on both the

Banks and the Mainland sides of the bridge, and I no longer had an excuse for not going to school on Monday. So, I went.

My father now had an arduous schedule ahead of him. He had to cross over to the Mainland at 7:45 am and walk the full length of the bridge to 28th Street because they wouldn't let you drive out on the bridge on the Morehead side. Here he was met by my Uncle John Baker (husband of his sister, Reba, who was the first post office clerk). I remember that my Uncle John drove a Pontiac painted a color which was a cross between "fire truck red" and maroon. Uncle John then carried Daddy to pick up the mail and me to school (when I finally did go back). Then he carried Daddy back to the bridge where he had to walk back to the draw span, climb down to water level, board the "Sylvia," cross over to the south "terminal," climb back up onto the bridge and drive to the Beach post office with the mail. No sooner had he done this and turned around twice, than it was time for him to go back with the first outgoing mail of the day from the Beach and to pick up the second incoming mail from Morehead. Then, by the time he had made that trip and grabbed a mou'ful of dinner (now called lunch), it was time to take the last outgoing mail of the day back to Morehead. My daddy was not in bad shape physically, but neither was he a mountain climber, and by the end of the first day he was completely "give-out." And then, he had Thursday, Friday and Saturday to look forward to. Thank the Lord for Sunday when he could at least catch his breath, since the one mail in and out on Sunday stopped after Labor Day. My Monday he was kind of getting a little bit used to his new invigorating lifestyle, and with the advent of the stairways, he was able to make it until the repairs on the bridge were completed.

By the end of the first week of this "mailboat experience," we felt just like a crowd of "Downeasters," completely isolated from the rest of the world even though the trip of the mailboat was only a little over a hundred yards. However, unlike the true "Downeaster's" who were often lucky to get two mails a week, we still got two mails a day!

"Uncle George" Smith was hauling the mail and school youngern's (grade 6 and above) between Morehead and Salter Path at that time in that old black Maria he had, and when the bridge got knocked out, he also used the "Sylvia" as the mailboat for that community. Of course, this was not Salter Path's first mailboat, since Uncle George had used his own boat to carry the mail to Salter Path in the years before the bridge came to Bogue Banks.

Believe it or not, they got the lights fixed in short order, I think on the second day after the accident. The bridge, how-



The "Sylvia II," still watching and waiting on Bogue Sound at Peltier Creek. Photo courtesy of Bob Simpson.

ever, was a different story. It was supposed to have been repaired in 3 or 4 days, but it set in raining and delayed the reopening. By the end of the first week of this "mailboat experience," we felt just like a crowd of "Downeasters," completely isolated from the rest of the world even though the trip of the mailboat was only a little over a hundred yards. However, unlike the true "Downeaster's" who were often lucky to get two mails a week, we still got two mails a day!

Then, as suddenly as it began, our moment of glory was over. The bridge reopened at noon on Wednesday, September 29, 1948, and the days of our mailboat were gone, perhaps forever. The days of routine mail transportation, exclusively by motor vehicle over completely bridged sounds and estuaries, resumed. Although our moment in history was over, at least Daddy would have the rest of the winter to recover from his ordeal.

The "Sylvia" returned to the Morehead City waterfront. She was later renamed "Sylvia II," since another "Sylvia" had shown up and having two "Sylvia's" at one time was a little confusing. Capt. Tony then sold her to Capt. Theodore, who later had her sink at the waterfront in a storm. Capt. Theodore then sold her, still sunk, to the first two gullible souls to come along. This just happened to be Capt. Bob Simpson and his wife Mary, who not only raised the "Sylvia II," but restored her to first class condition. The trials and tribulations of the "Sylvia II" since her mailboat days are well documented in her own chronicle, *When the Water Smokes*, written by Capt. Bob, who is still her owner and skipper. It is available from the *Coastlore Trader* or at local bookstores. Today the "Sylvia II" lies in repose at her moorings on Peltier Creek west of Morehead City, awaiting her next -- call to glory!

"Perilous Journey Ends Safely in 1918"

Reprinted from Carteret County News-Times, December 5, 1974

(Note: Cold weather on the coast brings to mind the big freeze of the winter of 1917-18. It set in a few days after Christmas and continued for almost a week in January. The late Allen Taylor of Sea Level, wrote the following account as told to him by his brother. It was brought to The Mailboat by Sammy Taylor, nephew of Allen Taylor)

... They walked back home a distance of about 20 miles, 15 miles of the route being over water they had sailed a few days previous.

My brother, J. E. Taylor, owner of the sharpie "Clem" built in Smyrna, NC, in the winter 1891, and his two companions, Louis Elliott and Edward Salter, all of Sea Level, were dredging oysters at a place known as the Marshes in the lower mouth of Neuse River where it empties into Pamlico Sound.

They had not quite finished their load of oysters to take to the New Bern market when the great freeze set in on Saturday, December 29, 1917 and lasted until January 6, 1918.

They were anchored at Henry Hill's Harbor close by. It snowed all during Saturday night with the thermometer falling fast and by Monday registered 12 degrees above and before nightfall the boat was held firm in an icy grasp.

The men soon began to realize the seriousness of their situation as they sat in their little cabin which would only accommodate four persons in a sitting position. The only way of heating was a two-burner oil stove on which they did their cooking, and melting ice from the water barrel to drink.

The men watched, hoped and waited through the week. The freeze became worse instead of better, ice forming around the boat four or five inches thick. Now food and oil were getting low. They were already on a meager diet, the temperature playing around 10, 12, and 13 degrees above, with no possible relief in sight.

They had to face a very grave decision, stay with the boat and freeze or starve, or take a chance and try to walk home on the ice. The uninhabited land route with its dense growth of marshes and undergrowth all covered with frozen snow and ice seemed almost impossible but was under consideration. The water route had its dangers too -- air holes. This route would take them over water that was 12 to 15 feet deep, which they all knew.

In preparing for this hazardous journey, a note was left in the cabin of the boat, outlining the two routes under consideration. This information would aid searching parties to find their bodies in case they never reached home. They took with them

what little food they had left, a fry pan, hatchet, small can of oil, boat hook to test the thickness of the ice, and about 10 yards of rope, one end of which was held by my brother, J.E., the leading man.

The walk was planned in a V-formation as the wild geese fly, the object of the rope held by the leading man was should he find thin ice or an air hole, the two hind men could pull him back to safety. The V-formation was to distribute the weight of the men also.

To prevent slipping, nails were driven through the heels of the men's shoes from the inside protruding outward about one-fourth inch. Everything was done that could be thought of for the safety of the journey.

The men offered prayers to Him who arose and rebuked the wind and said unto the sea, "Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm." -St. Mark 4:39

To prevent slipping, nails were driven through the heels of the men's shoes from the inside protruding outward about one-fourth inch. Everything was done that could be thought of for the safety of the journey.

The three men stepped on the ice that had held their boat in its icy grasp and had kept them prisoners for five long anxious days and nights and headed in the direction of home,

This was Friday, January 4, 1918, 6 o'clock am. The walking time was six-and-one-half hours. They followed the all-water route, crossing both New Stump Bay and Long Bay, at or near their mouth, in some places over 12 to 15 feet deep. Edward Salter is the only one now living (1974) and still lives here at Sea Level.

In concluding this item, I would like to add my brother told me that Pamlico Sound and Neuse River as far as the eye could see was one unbroken sheet of ice. After the freeze broke up and the ice had all disappeared, it was found that great numbers of porpoises died from suffocation as the porpoise, like the whale (fish in form) and air-breathing, they could not penetrate the ice to get air, died and drifted up along the shores of the rivers and sounds.

What happened to the skiffs?

Joel Hancock

December 23, 1990

Leaving the Island this morning to go to Morehead, I noticed that the Refuge Harbor was "packed full" of boats. Every slip was taken, the nets secured, while the fishermen who owned and worked them retired for the Christmas holiday.

The sight was somewhat unsettling for a couple of reasons. First, because very few croakers have been caught so far this winter. From what I have heard, the fishermen have had only one good catch since the end of November when the season supposedly began. Usually the month from Thanksgiving and Christmas is the best four weeks of the year for gill netters.

Several years ago, when I was fishing with my brother Michael, we caught a "boat load" of croakers almost every day for two weeks running. It was pretty much a standing joke that every time someone showed a good sigh of croakers he would call home on the C.B. radio and tell his wife to "go ahead and send that order off to Sears Roebuck," meaning that he now would have money to pay for the C.O.D. packages once they arrived. This year, for whatever may be the reason, very few Christmas packages will be paid for by money made selling croakers.

Secondly, and even more troubling to me, was the thought that all the boats gathered in the Refuge Harbor, and in the several other small bays on the back (north) side of Harkers Island, meant that few, if any, boats remained moored at the landing, the way they all were when I was a boy.

In those days, every fisherman had his boat anchored or tied along the shore directly in front of his home, or at least the path that led there. All along the south side of the Island, from Shell Point to Red Hill, the fishing boats lined up like some primitive armada.

Prevailing southwesterly winds in the warmer months kept their sterns facing the shore, each one emblazoned with a special name, peculiar to the man and the family for which the boat was the main source of income. Dallas Rose's boat was called the "Wasted Wood," for that was what he categorized it as being. Others had names like "We Four," "The Boys," "Seven Brothers," "Barbara," and at my daddy's landing, the "Ralph." The "Ralph" was named for my oldest brother who had been my father's first (and probably his favorite) crew member. Most of the boats were spoken of as if they were a person, always using

the feminine pronoun. The family's fishing boat was, in a very real sense, a part of the family.

The boats were generally moored between one and two hundred feet offshore. For that reason they required something that many fishermen now can do without; a skiff. Twelve to fifteen "foot" skiffs were pulled up almost everywhere along the south shore of the Island. There probably were more skiffs than there were real fishing boats. Not everyone could afford a big boat, but almost anyone could have his very own skiff.

Fishermen used skiffs to get from the shore to his boat. It generally was light enough to enable one man to pull it up on dry land all by himself, especially if he used rollers. Others left their skiffs tied or anchored only a few feet beyond the tidal line

so rolled-up pants were all that were needed to wade to the skiff, even at high tide.

Skiffs also served as readily available "pack horses" that could be pulled behind bigger boats to carry nets, drags, or rakes used by the commercial fishermen as well as the fish, clams, oysters, or scallops that they might catch. It could even be used to ferry a banks pony back and forth between



Skiff sketch by David Lawrence

Shackleford Banks and the Island if a young boy's pleading yielded the desired results.

Harkers Island skiffs were all pretty much the same. Some were just a little bigger or smaller than others. They had no flare or deadrise, being the truest of "flat-bottomed" boats. Each one had at least one oar, generally about eight feet in length; just enough to push off the bottom anywhere on this side of the channel. They were outfitted with an iron anchor and fifty feet of sisal rope that ran through a small hole cut into the small front deck.

The skiffs almost always were made of juniper, the lightest native wood available, to make them all the easier to pull ashore or back into the sound. For convenience in building, they generally were "cross-planked," a construction method much simpler than the length-wise planking used in bigger boats. They generally had at least one thwart seat, which everyone called simply a "thought." This "thought" also strengthened the sides of the boat by serving as a cross beam.

There was at least one other feature common to every Island skiff; a bailer. Long ago they were made of wood with a

The 8th Street Congress (From "A Crab In My Pocket")

Tom Brinson

The "8th Street (Morehead) Congress" was a loose collection of retired men and codgers that on every day that weather permitted occupied benches along 8th Street beside the Marine Hardware or across the street beside Rose's. The daily sun traverses perpendicular to the course of 8th Street. Therefore, the 8th Street Congress convened on the east side in the morning and west in the afternoon in order to stay in the shade. Congress never convened too early in the morning, adjourned for a lengthy lunch, (while the sun was straight overhead) and adjourned again in early afternoon.

My grandfather was a tenured member of this informal congress who's only purpose was to provide companionship, whittle mountains of cedar shavings, solve the problems of the world and spit. I don't know how many members there actually were, as many of them changed from day to day. There were from six to ten in attendance on any day, and it only took only two for a quorum to discuss the issues of the day.

My grandfather was very skilled with his hands and practiced in the use of a pocketknife. While he was capable of carving almost anything he wanted, I never saw him whittle anything in session but unbroken ever-so-thin curls of cedar the length of the piece in hand. He always carried a supply of various sizes of whittling sticks in his little Crosley car.

It was a great honor for me to be allowed to accompany my grandfather and sit with him on the bench. I, of course, was not allowed to whittle and my only attempt at spitting failed to launch beyond my chin. Fortunately, for my ambitions to one day join this august body as a full member, the incident went unnoticed by the congress.

My grandfather was very skilled with his hands and practiced in the use of a pocketknife. While he was capable of carving almost anything he wanted, I never saw him whittle anything in session but unbroken ever-so-thin curls of cedar the length of the piece in hand. He always carried a supply of various sizes of whittling sticks in his little Crosley car. After he would park his Crosley, he would reach in the back seat, retrieve an assortment of cedar whittling sticks, turn them over in his hands with serious deliberation over the seemingly invisible whittling attributes of individual sticks and finally select

the right one. I never understood just what it was he was looking for; they all looked like just plain sticks to me. I also never knew why all of the congress whittlers, except for rare occasions, whittled cedar. It may have been because it was a free and commonly available wood that smells fantastic.

There was always around the bench, the smell of Bay Rum (an aftershave lotion, not a drink), and rich aromatic cedar. Talk would go on at a leisurely pace for hours as those who whittled made long carefully guided strokes through their cedar sticks with pocket knives of unquestionable sharpness. Periodically one of the men might pull a whetstone from his pocket, spit on it and proceed to touch up the edge of a knife he felt might need a little correction.

The benches of the 8th Street Congress were there from the beginning of my recollection but disappeared sometime after my grandfather's death. This gathering was an important part of the lives of these men whose fading years would not be spent in a nursing home. It gave a purpose to their days, fellowship with others of like mind and interest and kept them mentally active. So important was this gathering that although my grandfather was sick, he drove from Edenton, North Carolina (where my father's work had taken all of us for two years) back to Morehead and there he died of a stroke, while on his way to attend the day's session of congress.

There was always around the bench, the smell of Bay Rum (an aftershave lotion, not a drink), and rich aromatic cedar. Talk would go on at a leisurely pace for hours as those who whittled made long carefully guided strokes through their cedar sticks with pocket knives of unquestionable sharpness.

Images of the benches, the faces, various pleasant smells and rolls of cedar shavings blowing down the street flood my memory whenever I cross 8th Street. All the men are dead now, and the benches are long gone, but I think their ghost may still come and sit in the spring shade to whittle and talk. I haven't seen them, but I have smelled the Bay Rum and the cedar.

Brought to The Mailboat by Mrs. A. L. Brinson

The Schools at Lukens

Excerpts from research by Eloise Blair

... There was no schoolhouse at Turnagin Bay, although families would hire a teacher to come live with them and teach their children. Littleton Mason built the first schoolhouse at Brown's Creek in 1848. In 1886 Joseph C. Mason built a schoolhouse at Brown's Creek which served all the children from Turnagin Bay, Brown's Creek, and South River.

In 1902 the Shop Hills Schoolhouse was built halfway between Brown's Creek and Lukens. One problem with this location was that sheep stayed under the schoolhouse and fleas were insufferable. Myrtle bushes were spread under the schoolhouse in an attempt to drive the fleas away. By 1920 everyone had left Brown's Creek, and the Shop Hill's Schoolhouse was moved to Lukens near the Joe Mason place. In 1921 or 1922 a school was built behind the Joe Mason place at the Grove Field.

A partial listing of those who taught at the Shop Hills Schoolhouse and their Lukens Schoolhouse include Fannie Paul, Bryan Paul, Daniel Caffrey, Molly Tingle, Lettie Mason, Clara Oglesby, a Mr. Phillips, Bessie Wallace Carraway, Pearl Smith, Lena Lewis, Daisy Davis, Helen Lewis, Edna Willis, Sudie Guthrie, Sadie Thomas, Lucy Twine, Callaway Heritt, Grace Wilson, Virginia Wade, Inez Davis, Hazel Noe, and Velma Johnson.

Great-grandmother Sarah Edwards learned to read and write from the teachers who boarded at her home. Perhaps teachers instructed her in exchange for the good venison stews and "freckled biscuits" she provided for them. Others who boarded teachers were Keigh and Brittie Pittman, Joe and Geneva Mason, Nan Jane Pittman, Henry and Cora Banks, Horace and Pherbe Lewis, and Willie and Mary Pittman.

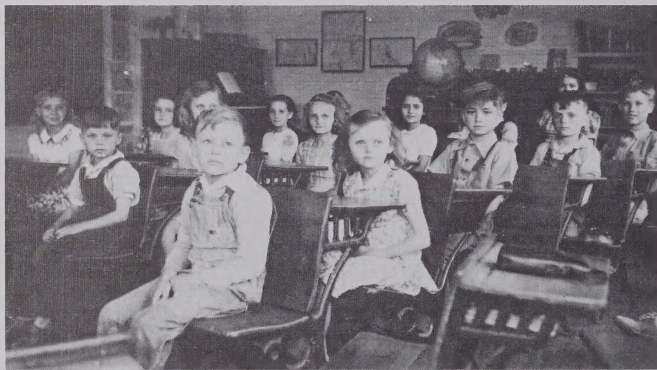
In the year 1912 school was in session for only three weeks because of a smallpox epidemic. In 1913 the school term was lengthened from three to six months. All grades were taught in the one-room school, and there was never any high school instruction offered.

Daisy Davis who lives at Marshallberg tells an interesting story about her teaching experience at Lukens from 1941-43. Her initiation to her new teaching assignment there began with a trip across South River in an open boat in a downpour of rain. All her teaching supplies for the year were on the boat with her. Daisy cried all the way across the river thinking that she was being marooned to some dreadful, God-forsaken place.

Immediately she was "adopted" by the Henry Banks family with whom she boarded for her two-year stay. Once she got acclimated, she found teaching conditions there to be ideal. She

had great freedom to structure her classroom and plan her learning activities; she felt very little pressure from her superiors who were one river and 18 miles away in Beaufort. When her stay at Lukens was over, Daisy found it very difficult to leave the people and the place she had grown to love dearly.

In 1943-44 there were eighteen children, grades 1-8, from approximately 20 families living at



Inside Lukens School (1943-1944) Front Row: Berkley Lewis, Madeline Pittman, James Henry Pittman, Bruce Norman, Eugene Pittman. Second Row: Brantley Norman, Sarah Jane Norman, Janice Norman, Mary Catherine Hardy, Dorris Lee Norman, Sadie Ray Pittman. Third Row: Dorothy Pittman, Vanda Norman, Kathleen Hardy, and Elsie Norman. Photo courtesy of Eloise Blair.

Lukens then (see picture). The teacher that year was Miss Grace Wilson, a friend of Miss Georgina Yeatman who then owned the Open Grounds Farm.

In 1944-45 school was conducted for only six months. The last teacher was Velma Johnson. Whether the school was closed because no teacher could be found to continue it or whether no effort was made by the county to secure a teacher because of so few pupils is a matter of conjecture. Some say that the wartime shortage of teachers created a problem. Regardless of why it happened, the closing of the school sounded the death knell of the community. Those residents with children were forced to move either to Oriental or to the South River-Merrimon area of the west side of South River. The Lukens Schoolhouse was moved across South River where it was used for several years until pupils from South River and Merrimon were bused to Beaufort.

(Eloise Blair's family lived at Lukens many years).

Memories of a Teacher at Lukens

Grace Wilson

The first visit to the schoolhouse was gratifying for I found that I had a newly painted room, about 20' X 14', windows on the front and one side, childrens' desks, a teacher's desk and chair, a long bench, a stove with its necessary equipment and a good supply of coal. Basal textbooks were to be sent from the office of the County Superintendent twenty-seven miles away and it would be necessary for me to plan for supplementary books, art materials and library books! A challenge to say the least.

School opened with eighteen children and my heart lightened by their enthusiasm. We organized with Sadie Ray as president, Dorris Lee as vice-president and Mary as secretary, while the rest of the children were happy to be on committees to assist with the general running of the classroom. How I wished that some of my friends could have shared with me the great satisfaction of that first day for we had not only organized but we had made plans for tie-dyed curtains to be made out of cheesecloth, had changed to desks so that all children would have adequate light at their desks, provided for proper placement of desks for the left-handed children, improvised a cloakroom and put new material on a screen in order to hide the stove when it was not in use.

This was followed by the serious business of taking standard tests in order to ascertain grade placement, after which the children understood better where they needed to improve.

Days were busy ones for there were eighteen children to be planned for and someone in each of the eight grades. Within a short time, a piano, a roll top desk, filing cabinet and typewriter were taken down the river to the school house by kind friends and kinfolk and these were followed by a generous gift of well chosen library books being made to the school. A schoolhouse is not complete without an American flag, so that, too, was given to us and Dorris Lee made the standard for it from a sapling and piece of log.

Life went on in a very busy and interesting way, for the program had to provide for all the subjects plus art, music and recreation; however, the eagerness of the children to improve in every way made the planning and teaching a pleasure.

We needed chairs for group work, so Dorris Lee made very sturdy ones out of orange crates and sand. The girls, under the direction of Sadie Ray and Evilee, cut and sewed attractive back covers and cushions which were made comfortable by filling them with the Spanish moss from the tree close by. You never saw greater satisfaction or delight expressed, than when this new furniture was in use -- the work of their own hands for brothers, sisters, cousins and friends!

As soon as we felt that we were ready to share our plans and activities with the parents and friends, we had an evening meeting when, as I well remember, it was necessary to make our



The Student Body of the School at Lukens poses in front of their school with their teacher, Miss Grace Wilson (back row center) in 1943-1944. Photo courtesy of Eloise Blair.

way to the schoolhouse door by brandishing stout poles in order to have the cattle return to the woods where they were accustomed to roam. Interest was high, a spirit of cooperation permeated the atmosphere and keen attention was expressed as I talked with the folks concerning my general ideas and plans for the year. Then as darkness began to fall, kerosene lamps were lighted and one of the mothers played the newly acquired piano for a regular community sing. During that evening I felt a kind of unity of purpose and spiritual understanding spring up between the community and myself; from that moment on there never could be greater cooperation than I experienced while I was in that little village of Lukens, NC.

The school committeemen, Mr. Henry Banks, was of inestimable help and a kind of hub of the wheel in the community. He had the store, the post office and was always ready to give paternal advice. He was a source of authentic information concerning the history of the community. He also kept the folks informed of current events because his radio was always in good order in spite of the fact, that lacking electricity, batteries were necessary.

With all of these advantageous conditions, life in Lukens gave promise of having a very different flavor from other years of teaching and that very difference was what I desired. We tried conscientiously to improve the three R's, but life held much more than those skills for all of us. (*Grace F. Wilson, June 30, 1952*)

"Harlowe's Private Schools"

MaryLou Mason Langdon

Harlowe had two private schools which were used locally as well as by the surrounding communities between 1865-1926. Both buildings are still standing today.

Harlowe Creek Academy was built by Rufus Bell in 1865-66 "Principal-ly for the enlightenment of his own family of four boys and seven girls" (*News-Times*, Dec. 25, 1980), but many other children came from surrounding areas. Some came for the day and others boarded locally. "The community enjoyed untold educational advantages as result of the school. Harlowe was acclaimed from far and near as a cultural center." (*News-Times*, Dec. 25, 1980).

The Academy's first principal, W. T. R. Bell, a well-educated Virginia, was a Captain in the War between the States who later established schools in King's Mountain and South Carolina. Other teachers were Miss E. Janie Bell, Matilda Hardesty, and E. D. Hardesty. The last date found for a teacher at the Academy was 1897. Mrs. D. G. Bell ("Miss Madie" of Morehead), granddaughter of Rufus and Abigail (sister of famous Emeline Pigott) attended both schools in Harlowe. Records (including the 1868 Commencement Program) were kept by Mrs. J. H. Davis ("Miss Mary") whose husband was a grandson of Rufus. Fortunately, The Academy Building has been maintained and is presently the home of Mrs. Gordon Becton.

Harlowe School on Hwy 101 was built by Dr. Charles North Mason (1854-1936) or his father, James H. Mason (1821-1907). (Mildred Salter Lawrence states in "The Heritage of Carteret County, NC," Vol. I, 1982, p. 13, that the building was built by James.) No date of construction is known, though the builder is known to have been William (Billy) Becton whose descendants still live in Harlowe.

Dr. Charles North Mason, savant and local physician, graduated from Trinity College (later Duke University) as valedictorian, and was keenly interested in education. He was appointed Carteret County Superintendent of Schools in 1886. His wife, Bettie Olivia Fearrington and daughter, Rosalind, were teachers at this school. His five children and some of his grandchildren attended.

Mrs. Clara Davis (Fodrie) Thompson of Craven Street in Beaufort, remembers teaching at the Harlowe School in 1925-26. Her mother Gertrude Hill Howard, also taught there. "Miss D." remembers. "I made \$65.00 a month and thought it was a fortune. I drove my Model "T" Ford from Blades (North Harlowe) to the school and picked up students along the way. The school was one large room with a pot-bellied stove in the middle and a rostrum or stage in the rear. (Plays given by the school were a local attraction.) There were approximately 25 students in Grades 1 - 7 who attended approximately nine months."

Dorothy Baxter LeHew, granddaughter of C. N. Mason, attended first and second grades (1917-18) described the school this way. "There was a large room, a stage, and I believe, a balcony. Outside toilets were behind the school. One teacher taught all the grades. Children walked to school -- some walking several miles." In the early 1930's, the school was moved across the road closer to the Mason home to be used as a barn.

More memories of the Harlowe schools must still exist! Could you help us with more facts, pictures, names, dates? Call MaryLou Mason Langdon at 240-1921.

"The School Boat"

Mrs. Thelma Simpson

We have been made aware of the importance of the Mailboat as a means of transporting mail, passengers, and freight from one end of Carteret County to the other; but did you know that children were transported to and from school in this same manner?

Many of you have read the late Mildred Lawrence's account of the "School Boat" that carried students across Adam's Creek when she was growing up; but the "School Boat" I am speaking of carried children from Lennoxville to Beaufort when I was a child.

When our family moved from Smyrna to Lennoxville in 1915, no school existed in the community. My father, the late Hardy Pake, saw this need, so he sent us to school in Beaufort by boat, with his younger brother, Sherlie as captain and engineer. Sherlie attended St. Paul's School while my brother, Charlie and I attended Beaufort Graded School. It stood where the parking lot for the Carteret County Courthouse facility is now located.

In 1916, my cousin Naomi Goodwin from Cedar Island stayed with us and attended school in Beaufort by boat as did some of the children from "across the Point." This is what we always called the children who lived on the back side of Lennoxville.

By the following school term (1917), Sherlie had joined his older brothers, Will and Stanley, who had joined the Navy and were stationed in Norfolk, Virginia. For this term, the Carteret County School Board had hired a teacher to teach the children of Lennoxville. At that time a building was needed to use as a school.

My father, with the help of Mr. C. P. Dey (dec.) acquired a former Methodist Church building for that purpose. This building had been built before the turn of the century by the Methodist Church of Beaufort as a place of worship for the people of Lennoxville. Mr. and Mrs. C. P. Dey, lived in the community and owned the Menhaden plant which my father had been hired to operate. Around 1910, Mr. Dey and his family moved into town in the new home of Front Street and the church ceased to function.

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Atlantic High School's Teachers' Training Department

Elmo Gaskill, Jr., Principal of Atlantic Elementary School

In the 1920's there was a tremendous shortage of teachers in the state of North Carolina. In order to meet the needs, Teacher Training Departments were organized in high schools. As many as 20 counties had one of these programs between 1925-1930. Students had to meet the same requirements to enter as they would have at E.C.T.C., Atlantic Christian or Appalachian State. The term of instruction was nine full months. The Department did not compete with the colleges and normal schools because most of the students in the High School Teacher Training Program could not make financial arrangements to attend college. During the nine-month term the students observed other teachers and actually did practice teaching themselves. During the last six weeks of the nine-month course, the Teacher Training students were expected to organize and conduct a school of their own. The "guinea pigs" were usually students who would enroll in First Grade the next year. So, in actuality, a six-weeks kindergarten class was organized by prospective teachers.

The State Department of Public Instruction wanted the programs to produce about 500 teachers a year to take care of the needs of the rural schools.

In Carteret County, Atlantic High School was chosen to be the Teacher Training Course Center. Atlantic High School had many graduates who wanted to be teachers, but the lack of money forced many to stay at home. The Teacher Training Department opened the way for many of the young women to further their education, get employable skills and fill the country's need for teachers to staff the county schools, which numbered as many as 42 back then.

The Directory of the School Officials of North Carolina lists Berta P. Coltrane as the teacher trainer and Meriel Grovers as the principal at Atlantic in December of 1925.

From information that I have received from the Department of Instruction, it appears that the program ran from 1925 to 1930. The Depression probably stopped the program's finances. Each class averaged 12 - 15 students.

After the course was completed, each student was tested and granted a teaching certificate if they passed.

After graduating, the next year would find these new teachers at schools like Wire Grass, Lukens, Hog island, White Oak, Bettie, Stacy, Lola, Roe, Batchelor, Bogue, Otway, Sea Level, Davis, Harkers Island, and others.

Some of the students who went through this program boarded in Atlantic during the week and went home for the weekends. Transportation was still mainly by boat (often the mailboat) from Atlantic to Beaufort and other communities. Some cars were around but they were few in number and the bridges were not very good. The Teacher Training Department at Atlantic High School was a way out for the young ladies who wanted a profession, a way to make money and also a way to meet eligible men in some of the other communities.

I had the opportunity to interview some of the participants in the Teacher Training Program who went through this experience more than 45-50 years ago and have recorded some of their comments.

Mrs. Francis Smith Lyons of Dundalk, Maryland commented that she and cousin Mattie Smith Durtin of Cedar Island took the Teachers Training Program while waiting for their opportunity to attend nurses' training. They both completed the course and then went on to nurses' training in Atlantic City, New Jersey. Francis said that Poppa John (her father) caught a lot of fish that particular year, and that was the only way she could afford to go to school. Both of them became nurses.

Mrs. Ruth H. Hamilton who attended the Teacher Training Course during the fall of 1927 and the spring of 1928 remembered that she taught at Hog island (Lupton) her first year and made \$75.00 a month for 8 months. She continued upgrading her certificate until she got an "A-Degree" from Atlantic Christian College. She taught 29 years in the Carteret County Public Schools before retiring. Other members of her class included: Alice H. Gerock, Veda H. Styron, Edna Mason Willis, Marie Taylor Lloyd, Nadine Harris, Corbett Davis, Minnie Davis, Pearl Alligood, Amanda Nelson Ross, Laura Salter, and Mittie Golden Mason.



The "Teacherage" at Atlantic; similar to the boarding houses for teachers found in other rural communities.

"A Love Affair"

Barbara Smith Willis

I have never forgotten that day in 1926 when my friend Laura Robinson and I went alone to our first day of kindergarten. (This was really an experimental teacher-training program at the old Atlantic High School.) I fell in love with school immediately -- a love that has remained with me for almost sixty-five years. We didn't learn to read and write that year, but we were exposed to art, music, poetry, and story reading. How exciting it was!

Then came the first grade. I feel great affection for the ladies who lived in Atlantic who were my teachers from grades one through six -- Mrs. Vera Robinson Freeman, Mrs. Grattis Truitt Mason, and Mrs. Roma Morris Davis. Each teacher had two classes in each room as I progressed to the seventh grade.

I remember some special programs from those days. I played an xylophone in our first grade band. The white dress and red cape that I wore as my uniform were both made by my mother.

We had operettas every year. Since my mother could make paper flowers, I was either a rose or a daisy each time. I couldn't sing or dance very well, but I loved sitting by a fence in my paper costume.

The seventh grade was an interesting year with Miss Fannie Robinson as my teacher. She had traveled by ship to Europe and had traveled to many areas of the United States with her teacher friends. Because I loved geography and dreamed about seeing all of the countries of the world, I enjoyed her many stories about her travels.

Then came high school, which in those years, meant grades eight through eleven. My principal was Mr. J. Albert Batson, whom I respected and admired. He was strict but fair as he led us through our high school years.

I fell in love with school immediately -- a love that has remained with me for almost sixty-five years. We didn't learn to read and write that year, but we were exposed to art, music, poetry, and story reading. How exciting it was!

Some of our good high school teachers came from "off," as we Downeaster's would say. Mrs. Hester Davenport Mason, who came from Columbia, North Carolina and married in Atlantic, helped me to write poetry. Miss Idelle Jones, my eleventh grade English teacher, assured me that I, too, could become a teacher. Mrs. Elsie Parker Salter came to us when she was almost as young as we were and remained to become principal of the school for a number of years. Another Atlantic

teacher whom I remember well was Mr. Jimmy Mason, our excellent science teacher.

Our high school classes were conducted in the basement of the school where our library and our science laboratory were located. We attended Chapel twice a week. *The Golden Book of Favorite Songs* was our songbook. Who could forget singing "A Spanish Cavalier" and "My Name Is Solomon Levi," with one-half the student body singing one song and the other half singing the other song at the same time! Most of us knew the words of the patriotic songs that we sang each week.

All of these good school experiences nurtured my ambition to become a teacher. My family also played an important part. My father and mother were interested in the best educational opportunities for all their children. Papa, John D. Smith, was a school board member for more than forty years. Mama, Frances Mason Smith, "boarded" teachers in our home. My oldest sister, Lucy Smith Pake, was a teacher in Johnston County and in Carteret County. My second sister, Meda Smith Mason, taught in the local schools for a number of years. These sisters were very good to me -- so good, in fact, that I remember thinking when I was quite small, "School teachers must make a great deal of money!"

In the fall of 1937, I enrolled in the freshman class at East Carolina Teachers College in Greenville, North Carolina. At the time, the cost for attending ECTC was less than three hundred dollars per year, but it was difficult sometimes to find that sum of money. I attended school winter and summer and graduated in 1940.

I feel that I received good training in that little school which had approximately twelve hundred students then -- one thousand girls and two hundred boys! We had some happy experiences. "Les Brown and His Band of Renown" played for dances at the Wright Building. I was thrilled to hear Carl Sandburg reading his poetry when he was a guest of the college. I can think of many other exciting experiences.

My teaching years were all in Carteret County among three schools -- Smyrna High School, Beaufort High School, and East Carteret. I enjoyed being a teacher for thirty-two years. I am grateful that my husband, Grayer Willis, my son, Keith, and my daughter-in-law, Annette, were always loving and cooperative as I graded papers, attended meetings, and pursued other degrees at ECU.

I firmly believe that teaching is a wonderful profession for those who love children and who love to learn. School was my first love, continuing to grow as I moved from a student to a teacher. Strangely, as I approached my "three-score and ten" years, I remember only the good things that have happened. I have many happy memories of my "children," many of which grew to be teachers themselves. I am proud that I was a teacher in Carteret County!

*John's Creek Diary**Madge Guthrie*

1919 - A very nervous seventeen year old lady had been appointed her first teaching assignment -- Cape Lookout, known then as Diamond City. She received her teachers' certificate by "correspondence course," her help and instruction was received through "The American Educator" (a form of encyclopedias) and instruction from Mr. Clem Gaskill. (Mr. Clem Gaskill is still remembered as a "genius" self-made.) The young teacher would continue her studies at East Carolina Teachers' College in the summer months for several years, thereby upgrading her certificate.

Her first day at Cape Lookout was a beautiful, crisp fall day. She had arrived early that morning by boat (naturally) and always remembered how the water was just slightly choppy and seemed to dance and giggle at her! She was quite leery of what she was facing. Her students would range from 1st grade to 8th. They would be children of fishermen's families who possibly never had any schooling outside the home before. (Little did she know that her most rewarding experience that first school year would be a fourteen year old boy -- back to him later!)

When she arrived at "The Cape" a young boy "poled" out in a skiff to take her to shore. The schoolhouse was one room with a pot-bellied stove and the fixtures and furnishings were remembered as "rather crude." Someone had thoughtfully started a fire in the heater and "it wasn't too bad." The building was opened (doors and windows) to the east. There were no openings on the other three sides. This building was also used for all other public affairs during cold or inclement weather. Of course in pretty weather everything was held outside. There were oil lanterns for light and "Teacher" had brought pencils and paper. (Some of the children had never seen a pencil before.) There were cedar logs in the corner for fuel as nothing gives off heat like cedar -- once you get it going!

By 9 o'clock four or five children had shown up, and others "straggled" in until by the end of the second day she had sixteen students, three of them older than she!

All-in-all the students adjusted quite well and wanted to learn. but as with all groups there were one or two who didn't. Earl Rose (one of the older students) became "assistant disciplinarian" on his own authority and did some "score settling" out of school. "Teacher" said this wasn't really proper, but it sure helped! One young girl was forced to attend by her parents, but at fifteen she had no use or desire for schooling. Neither did she want the others to go. After trying everything imaginable the teacher (on advise and authority of the superintendent) was compelled to expel her for the sake of the other students. "Teacher" passed away in 1986 and I could never get her to tell me who the girl was. She simply told me, "It's none of your business -- besides, her family might be embarrassed." (SHE was one lady who kept a secret for at least 55 years!)

Now back to the fourteen year old boy mentioned earlier. He came to school in his father's old clothes and often in any-

thing he could find to hide his nakedness and ward off the cold. He could neither read nor write, did not know his alphabet or numbers, but was eager to "know things." By the end of the first year he was reading quite well, his writing was exceptional and he was doing simple adding and subtracting. He had learned most everything taught to the different grades of students. I never knew his name either, "It may make some of the other "good" students think they were not important." Oh well, "Teacher" was no gossip!

Often times parents who couldn't get out to work their boats would slip in just to sit around the edge of the room to watch and listen. many times they would teach others in their family who had never had the opportunity to learn from a "real" teacher.

By mid-March attendance began to drop drastically. Nature was beginning to sprout, fish were showing-up, little pools of water among the sand dunes warmed by noon, while bottom-up skiffs needed scraping and painting to be ready for the spring and summer. The beach sand was moist and warm to bare feet and every morning that ol' sun blazed more golden and grand across the east'rd beach. Pa's needed the youngun's help, gardens and little orchards had to be cleared of winter's damage. "The sap was rising!" -- Hearts and minds were turning outside to the newness of the season approaching. Therefore, much was crammed into a six-month school year.

"Teacher" moved on to teach upstate at other schools, but it clear that none was more rewarding than "Diamond City."

"Teacher" was my mother, Pearl Willis (Whitley). She met my father, Joe Whitley while teaching at Sandy Cross, NC. Yes, Pap was an "upstater," but he could never get the salt water from her veins or the salt air from her lungs. They returned to Harkers Island to make their home for more than fifty years.



"Teacher" Mrs Pearl Willis Whitley, on the left, in the dark hat, with others on the mailbox.



Harkers Island School: _____
Grade, _____ Year

(1) Ernest Guthrie, Penny Fulford, Madelene Nelson, Chauncey Guthrie (2) Lois Yeomans, Marie Davis, Estelle Yeomans Fluhart, Lula Styron, Edith Guthrie Lewis (3) Gladys Davis, Lucille Fulcher, Callie Guthrie Russell, Nora Lewis (She scratched her face out of the picture.)

Old class photos brought to **The Mailboat** by Margaret Ann Rose, Mrs. Dorothy Guthrie and Madge Guthrie



Harkers Island School: 5th Grade, 1946

(1) Corrine Willis, Denny Lewis, Barry Willis, Frederick Willis, Red Brooks, Terry Whitley, Willard M. Guthrie, James A. Rose, Henry A. Brooks, Leebi Willis, Sherman Nelson, Jack Russell (2) Teacher ?, _____, Paul Willis, Jr., Edith Gray Russell, Annie Brown Gaskill, Eloise Lewis, Bertha Joy Davis, Colleen Willis, Linda Nelson Rose, Bill Guthrie, Paul Willis, Wilfred Dixon (3) Nancy Carol (Rose) Wells, Emma Louise (Rose) Guthrie, Dawn (Davis) Styron, Lillian (Lewis) Wright, Geneva Waite, Gladys Davis, Alice Joyce (Tillett) Davis, Barbara Allen Guthrie, Melva Louise Lewis, Calvin Rose

Harkers Island School: 1st Grade, 1946/47
(Teacher Miss Lionel)

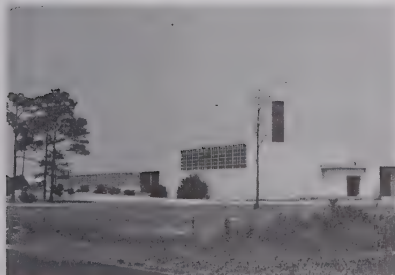
(1) Larry Nathan Willis, Billy Howard Gas-kill, Miles Willis, Teresa Sparks, Peggy Fulford, Lanny Rose, Elsie Janice Lewis, _____
(2) Harold Lee Jones, Leslie Roger Rose, David Glenn Willis, Rachel Willis (Hinnant), Judy Nelson (Guthrie), Margaret Ann Lewis (Clifton L. daughter), Hopie Dare Rose, Dale Moore, Larry Lee Guthrie
(3) Thomas Lee Willis, Phil Yeomans, _____ Willis, William Boyd ("Panny") Davis, Robert Paul Willis, Billy Willis, _____, Cornelius "Buster" Jones



Old class photos brought to **The Mailboat** by Margaret Ann Rose, Mrs. Dorothy Guthrie and Madge Guthrie



"The Old ...



... the New"

"From the Old to the New ..." by Beverly Willis Johnson

"Single file! No talking or running." This was the command of the day ... that bright sunny April morning in 1957. The long awaited day had finally arrived! Our feelings of anticipation, excitement, and yes, FEAR were at a peak.

My first grade class under the strict yet loving discipline of Rebecca Bell would make its way on foot the half-mile to our new school building. Left behind were all these signs and sounds and smells: tall ceilings, high windows that first graders couldn't even see out of, the creaking wooden floors, the sloped auditorium floor, the playground of white sand out by the Vergie Mae restrooms apart from the main building, tall-arched doorways, the musty damp smell of old wood, the teacherage (where ALL the teachers lived) ... and oh so much, much more that I remember so fondly.

We marched down the road on that day. A day, a normal hohum day that meant so little to the rest of the world, but was the ending of one era and beginning of another for a small group of us. For what seemed million miles we walked and then suddenly we were there. New sights, sounds and smells: red waxed floors that by spring were worn to dust (but would ruin your white bobbi sock - newly waxed or not), one hallway that was "miles" long, a bathroom and sink right in our first grade room, a cafeteria with hot lunches for 25 cents (even though you could still go home for lunch), piles of sand and dirt on the playground left from the construction to play on and in ... and NEW desks!

So began my years at Harkers Island Elementary. And you know, there was a closeness among us that was never matched after we graduated to high school. Even today when I think fondly of school, it is of those first days ... those simple, easy days.

Livin' & Learnin' Going to school at Harkers Island

Joel Hancock

The following is from an address given at Harkers Island Elementary School, April 24, 1982 at an assembly celebrating the 25th Anniversary of moving into the present school.

... Entering the first grade in 1958, for as of then there was no public kindergarten, I was a member of only the second class to spend all of my years at this school. Though the basic learning processes were fundamentally the same, there were a few things that were different. Extra curricular activities and learning aids were at a minimum. The library was still a library and not a media center. What we learned we learned either from books or from what our teachers told us. The idea of computers for the classroom was still relegated to science fiction.

But we did learn and most of us enjoyed it. Memorization was still an important part of the learning process. At various times we were required to memorize everything from the poetry of Robert Frost to the Pythagorean theorem. One of life's greatest pleasures was being able confidently to recite the multiplication tables. Reading was portrayed as an adventure. It became my gateway to the vast world that lie beyond the Bridge. My favorite pastime was thumbing through a set of **World Books**, (to us, **World Book** and encyclopedia meant the same thing for they were the only encyclopedias available.)

Spelling "Bees" were still the primary form of intra-school competition. And one stayed in the same classroom with the same teacher all day long, regardless of how you might have placed on a standardized achievement test.

In spite of a Supreme Court decision banning state prescribed prayers in schools after 1962, each morning began with a devotional. The "Pledge of Allegiance," "The Lord's Prayer," "My Country 'tis of Thee," and "Jesus Loves Me" were each repeated or sung with the same devotion and enthusiasm.

... The fun and games of my elementary years, physical education we now call it, had to be spontaneous or not at all. Until the final two years, I cannot recall any organized outdoor recreation. In the primary grades we lined up on Friday afternoons and were allowed to march outside to a slide. Once there we proceeded in an orderly up the steps and down the slide and then to the back of the line. After no more than a couple of these sequences we proceeded to march back to class and that was it for another week.

... Finally, in what seemed like an answer to prayers, while I was in the eighth grade there began a county-wide system of basketball teams for seventh and eighth graders. One of the driving forces behind the idea was our school's new principal, Mr. Walker Gillikin. He arranged for us to have physicals at the school from Dr. [Luther] Fulcher, who was then the County doctor, and worked out a schedule whereby we played every other elementary school in the county. We were issued the oversized, but still very beautiful, uniforms of Smyrna High School that had been discarded after the consolidation of the county's High

Schools. Henry Brooks, a former All-County performer at Harkers Island High School agreed to be our coach and we practiced and played in the gym of the L.D.S. [Mormon] Church. To the surprise of many we had a very successful year and lost only two games. That preparation paid some dividends later for during my senior year at East Carteret High School four members of that team were Varsity starters. Some of the school's supporters loved to refer to us as the "Four Loons" (a reference to the reputed culinary appetite of Harkers Islanders for that protected fowl).

But times weren't always pleasant and there are some bittersweet memories. My most painful recollections are of those days we all had to line up for the seemingly endless array of inoculations that the State inflicted on all public school students. Standing in line and watching your compatriots suffer was almost as bad as the needle itself, but not quite! Invariably, one of the nurses or parents who was helping to administer this "mass torture" would try to calm our fears by saying, "It feels just like a mosquito bite." But who would stand in line for a mosquito bite? And besides, the sensation was much closer to that of a yellow jacket sting to me. And if that wasn't punishment enough, the shots would stiffen your arm so much that you couldn't throw a baseball for a week.

Also, it should be pointed out that at that time a paddle was as much a part of education as was a pencil. Especially for us boys, a "paddling" now and then might be dreaded, but it positively could not be avoided. By the seventh grade it was almost an everyday occurrence. "Come to the front and bend across my desk!" was repeated as least as often as "get out your English books" After a while a few of us developed calluses over the afflicted area that served to lessen, but not completely eliminate, the sting. The near demise of "paddling" as a form of punishment is one development that part of me wholeheartedly applauds.

Another bittersweet memory of those years is of the many operettas and plays that each class had to stage every year. Practicing and learning the lines was O.K., but it was never easy to stand in front of a packed auditorium and recite those lines. And it was even worse when you had to sing them. Because I had been cast as a dwarf named "Squeaky" in a second grade production of "Snow White", some of my friends, or rather enemies as I then supposed, continued to call me by that name for years.

But mostly it was fun. We were **living and learning** at a school that sat by the banks of a tranquil sound. We were being taught by teachers who were genuinely concerned for us and for our futures. Each one of my teachers left an indelible imprint on the young boy they tried to help build into a young man.

... The teaching profession must have been more stable and offered greater stability then, for it seems that there was more continuity from year to year relative to which teachers could be found in the various classrooms of Harkers Island Elementary. In fact, it seemed to my generation and several before and after that as certain as death and taxes were the teachers of the various grades:

Miss Bell in the First, Miss Mabel (Guthrie) in the Second, Miss Sudie (Guthrie) in the Fifth, Miss Willis in the Sixth, and Miss Wade, always Miss Wade, in the Eighth. It was not uncommon for a student to have the same teacher as his or her parents may have had for the same grade. Some things might change, but those teachers never did. In retrospect, it seems that those Ladies gave a sense of permanence to school, and to life.

... Though we grew up on an Island, we were not completely isolated from what happened in the world around us. Important and often tumultuous events were taking place quickly in the 1960's and they were reflected within the walls of this school. I forever will recall most of them as a reflection of how I first experienced them. Years of study in the social sciences dim in comparison to the influence of those images upon my political and social conscience.

In 1960 John F. Kennedy ran for President and hoped to end forever any suggestion that a man or woman's political opportunities might be limited because of his or her religion. That effort caused shock waves to run throughout our country, especially here in the South. And not a few of those shock waves were felt as we third graders in Miss Daniels' class discussed and even argued whether Kennedy's election might mean that all of us would have to swear allegiance to the Pope. Then as now, we reflected the side of any debate that we had heard espoused in our homes.

Two years later, in October of 1962, Miss Sudie's fifth grade class, like every other class in the country, rehearsed together what we would do if a nuclear attack resulted from what was happening in Cuba. As if it were only yesterday I can recall my teacher asking a visiting School Board Official what he thought might happen as the Russian ships approached the limits of the American Navy's blockade. My heart sank to my stomach as I heard him suggest, though only in a whisper so that we children might not be alarmed, that he felt there was going to be a "War." Though we were only ten years old, we were sophisticated enough to know that war in 1962 meant something quite different than it had meant to our parents. We had read enough *Weekly Readers* to know that in this "War," children as well as soldiers would suffer from the "ultimate weapon." Seldom in the years since have I felt the relief that I sensed later that week when Miss Sudie joyfully proclaimed to the class that, "The Russians have turned back!"

But events moved quickly then as now, and there was little time for celebration. Only one year later, on an Indian summer's afternoon, we sat together as our teacher announced to us that our President had been shot and killed in Dallas, Texas. In the coming days she would try to explain many other things to us, such as why our flag was flying at half-mast. Unfortunately, there were some things she was never quite able to make clear. It took only a few hours for some, and days for others, but we eventually returned to the games and pleasures of childhood. Still, more than we had realized at the time, at that early point in our lives we had been shocked into reality; the reality that even in the fairy tale land of America we were yet to overcome ignorance, bigotry, and man's inhumanity to man.

... When viewed by today's standards, some critics might see the training that we received here at Harkers Island Elementary in the years after 1957 as having been less than ideal. But the "reading," "riting," and "rithmetic" that I and others learned here has served us well in the balance. Whatever our individual weaknesses or failures may have been, they are not attributable to the instruction or lack of it that we received while here. As a parent myself, I would be happy to bequeath to each of my children the same manner of primary schooling to which I was exposed.

We who came here carried away with us the beginnings of an education and the foundations of many lifelong friendships. And though we didn't realize it as much then, we also took from this institution a sense relative to that "two-lane blacktop" that is called the Harkers Island Bridge. Namely this; **it is far better to cross it heading south than to cross it heading north!**

"My Little Island ..."

Mr. Jimmie Guthrie, born on Cape Lookout, began writing for *The Beaufort News* in 1936. These excerpts are from old newspaper research and brought to *The Mailboat* by his granddaughter, Carrie Ann Guthrie Styron.

December 19th, 1940 - Again the Island school played Smyrna, and again Smyrna was the winner, but the local team plans to keep playing Smyrna at every opportunity until they win. Under the able and efficient leadership of the Island principal our school is liable to take all the pennants before the year has ended.

The young men of the Island are playing their part with the government. A total of 52 are off serving their country at various places. Walter Collins Willis is in Bermuda and James Guthrie (Carrie Ann's Daddy) on the "Lydonia" is in Puerto Rico today and he may be going through Panama Canal and to God knows where no so long from now.

State cutters "Hatteras" and "Pungo" surely sailed the salty seas last week checking on the small mesh netters. Mine were too large so they turned me loose. It must be the dealers at Beaufort who encourage the breaking of the small mesh law because they often have fish which are too small to ship. If enforced the small mesh law will save fish for our future generations instead of killing the fish when they are small.

Oh yes, I had forgotten. We'll soon have a bridge over here when we will get our own fish trucks at the door. Everything is fine. Wish you all a happy Christmas and lucky January 1941.

Let's join the Coast Guard Reserve Corps and give ourselves and boats over to our Uncle Sam and tell him to do anything he pleases with us.

Community Histories

(Smyrna School, Mrs. Ann Styron's 1990 4th Grade class)

Otway

The name of our community is Otway. It got its name from Otway Burns, a famous privateer. He is buried in Beaufort. There are three churches, one convenience store, one country store, four garages, one beauty shop, one hardware store, one auto parts store, four trailer parks, two campgrounds, one seafood market, and one health spa. We also have a public dump and a voluntary fire and rescue squad.

Our nearby communities are Smyrna, Bettie, and Straits. There are about 700 people in our community. People work at Cherry Point, and are carpenters and contractors. Several work on dredges, some are fishermen, and some work in stores. Most people travel to work by car or truck, but some walk.

The first people that lived in our community were Lawrences, Gillikins, and Lewises. Long ago Otway was mostly wooded areas with farm land and a few houses. An important event for Otway was when we got our fire and rescue building. An interesting place to visit in Otway is the campground where we can go swimming in the pool. (Michelle Lawrence and Dee Willis)

A famous man who lived in Otway was Decator Gillikin. If you hear anyone call someone else "Decator" that means that they are very strong. The story is told that Decator owed county taxes that he refused to pay. Many ways had been tried to collect these taxes and none had worked.

Some time later Decator went to Beaufort in his skiff to buy groceries and supplies. He tied his boat up and went to the grocery store. The tax collector saw Decator and said, "Boys, we've got him now!"

With the help of six men, the tax collector carried Decator's boat to the courthouse.

When Decator had finished his shopping, he came back to where he had left his boat. Seeing that his boat was missing, he said, "Boys, has anybody seen my boat?" Someone told him what had happened.

Decator walked to the courthouse, set his two bags of groceries inside his skiff, picked up the skiff, carried the skiff to the water, put it overboard, and shoved back to Otway. (Josh Gillikin)

Straits

The name of my community is Straits. My community gets its name from the body of water that lies between Straits and Harkers Island. The name of the communities that are near us are Otway, Gloucester, and Harkers Island. I live in the state of North Carolina which is located on the central eastern coast of the United States.

About 300 people live in my community. A lot of people that live in my community work at Cherry Point. Some of them are commercial fishermen, and many are people who have retired and moved here from other places.

My Uncle, David Chadwick, has a store and a boat repair business in Straits. Mr. Michael Sasser operates Coastal Canvas and my Daddy, Paul Damren, has a Mercury Dealership. He sells boats and motors.

The first people who lived in my community were the Chadwicks. Straits was a farm community years ago. They grew cotton and vegetables. They took a lot of their products up North to sell them. People traveled by boat long ago.

The only famous person I know would be Mr. Gerald Whitehurst. He was a county commissioner a few years ago.

One important thing that happened was the Straits United Methodist Church. It was the first Methodist Church east of Beaufort.

The most interesting place to visit in Straits is our shore at the Bridge. people come there to go fishing and swimming. (Michael Damren)

Marshallberg

The name of my community is Marshallberg. My community got its name from the man that delivered mail by boat. His last name was Marshall. Gloucester and Smyrna are the names of some nearby communities. The name of my state is North Carolina. My state is located on the east coast of the United States.

About 500 people live in my community. Many people work on the water, at the boathouses, or at Cherry Point. People travel to work by car or boat. The only store in my community is the "Korner." Some businesses in my community are four boat-works, a seafood business and a clam hatchery.

The first people to live in my community were people that moved from Shackleford Banks. Also, there were Indians in the very beginning.

My community looked very different then. It had dirt roads, small wood houses, no electric lights, no TV's and fields planted in crops. Everyone had a work boat at the shore. Shell piles were left along the shore from the Indians. Every home had an outdoor toilet.

Some famous people from my community are: Ray Davis - He built yachts that went all over the East Coast; Mr. L. W. Moore - Family doctor; W. Q. A. Graham - Founder of Graham Academy

One important thing was they dug clay from the Creek to help build Fort Macon. They paved the main roads in 1936. Electricity came about the same time. Schools began about 1875. The boat harbor was built in 1955.

Some interesting places that people might visit when they come to my community are the churches, the boathouses, fish houses, the boat harbor and the cemeteries. The reason people visit these places is to learn about the past and present. (Ramsey Davis)

*(Atlantic School Mrs. Sue Martin's 1991 3rd Grade Class)***Atlantic**

I live in the community of Atlantic, which is located in the state of North Carolina. North Carolina is located on the east coast of the United States. Atlantic got its name from the ocean across from the Outer Banks. This is called the Atlantic Ocean. To the east of Atlantic is an island called Cedar Island. To the west is the community of Sea Level, and farther west is Stacy.

There are about one thousand people living in Atlantic. Many of the men work at the business of commercial fishing. Some people work at the Red & White supermarket. A few people work at Winston Hill & Sons, owned and operated by Roderick Hill. This store was built in 1935. We also have Clayton Fulcher and Luther Smith Seafood Companies. Some people from my community work at Sailor's Snug Harbor and Sea Level Hospital. Most people from my community travel to work by car or truck.

People come to Atlantic to visit our cemetery when their ancestors are buried. Lots of people enjoy visiting old homes built in the 1800's. Winston Hill's, a general store is of interest to many people. My favorite thing to see in Atlantic is the shore side. You can see many fishing boats and sea life along the shore. I love "calling Atlantic home."

Atlantic was settled about 1740 and given the name "Hunting Quarters" until 1890 when it became Atlantic. The first people to live here were the Coree Indians which Core Sound was named after. Long ago there were no paved roads in Atlantic. There were no light poles or phone poles. Much of the shoreline has been washed away during the years. Some famous people from Atlantic are Joe Mason, Sr., 1902 Carteret County, House of Representatives. In 1958, our county commissioner was Gaston Smith. My great-grandfather, John Daniel Smith was chairman of the school board for more than forty years. In the 1930's, the roads were paved in Atlantic. Highway 70 East ends in Atlantic. (Toni Gaskill)

Sea Level

My name is Amy Goodwin. I live on the east coast between Virginia and South Carolina in the state of North Carolina. The name of my community is Sea Level. It is located between Atlantic and Stacy. Sea Level is almost level with the sea. That's how it got its name, "Sea Level."

My community of Sea Level has around 700 people living here. They have many different jobs. Some work at Cherry Point, the fish house, hospital, motel, while others fish, paint, or build houses. Many have to use a car or truck to get to their jobs. Others can use a boat or walk. The community doesn't have a store to buy food or gas. We have to go elsewhere. We do have a drug store, post office, bank, motel, and a hospital.

I believe the first people to live in the area of Sea Level were Indians. Then came the white people. Their last name was "Lupton." Sea Level was first named "Wit." Back then there wasn't any paved roads or street lights. People lived in log cabins. Everyone had gardens, cows, pigs, horses, and chickens.

Some famous people from Sea Level were the "Taylor Brothers." They all have died except one. They helped build

our hospital and motel. The building of the hospital was important. Many sick people go there to get better.

Sailor's Snug Harbor is a good place to visit. You can learn a lot from the old sailors that live there. You can see models of old sailing ships. Other places of interest would be our campground and churches. Our campground has a swimming pool and places to camp out. You can also put your boat into the water and go boat riding. We have five churches on Sea Level. They are so pretty inside! One has a picture of Jesus on the outside that has a light at night. A church is a nice place to be at anytime. (Amy Goodwin)

Stacy

The name of my community is Stacy, North Carolina. It is located in the middle eastern sea board. Davis, Sea Level, Atlantic, and Cedar Island are some nearby communities.

Stacy is a small township in Carteret County. It is made up of the two towns of Masontown and Piney Point. Masontown was located in the Rosemary Creek area, which changed to Lewis Creek. The first church in Stacy was started in Masontown. It was called Mason Chapel. Piney Point was located in the Fulcher Creek and Brett Bay area.

A request was made to the government for establishing postal service. Dr. William Paul was asked to change the name just because it didn't "sound right." They said he just "popped the name Stacy right out of his mind."

There are about 320 people living in my community. Some of the jobs around this area are fishermen, teachers, beauticians and working at Cherry Point. People travel by cars, trucks, and vans.

There is one store on Stacy. The name of the store is Eastern Quick Mart. The one business on Stacy is the Golden Seafood which is run by Bruce Golden.

The interesting places people visit would have to begin with the Stacy Freewill Baptist Church which is 110 years old. Of course people still love to meet and chat at the post office and the Eastern Quick Mart.

The first people to live in my community were the Coree Indians. Then in 1740, two brothers, one whose name was John Nelson, were the first white men to settle at the head of Nelson's Bay which was first called "Hunting Quarters" and then "Piney Point." It was a small fishing village which included several natural harbors and two bays. The plentiful pine trees and harbors made it a beautiful place to live.

Joe Lewis drove the first horse drawn mailcart. Mail was brought by boat. Among some of Stacy's most famous people were members of the Armed Services such as Theodore Salter, Eldon Fulcher, and Mitchell Fulcher. John Washington Fulcher was among the first to earn the Life Saving Medal at Cape Lookout. My great grandfather Irvin Fulcher was noted for his great duck decoys and grandmother says he even has some in a museum (but no one knows how they got there). Stacy has also produced two doctors, Dr. Salter and Dr. Luther Fulcher.

In 1885 Stacy applied for and received permission to operate a post office. Stacy was famous for its good fishing, hunting, and turpentine. It remains a good place today. (Stephen Cook)

'Hurricane Stories: "The Money Blow"

James Newman Willis III, ("Cap'm Jim")

When school let out in late May of 1944 for the summer vacation I had no inkling that in a few days my whole family would be plunged into the midst in one of nature's most awesome creations -- a hurricane! Born in 1934, I had just missed the '33 and had never even heard of a hurricane much less been in one. The worst storm I'd ever seen was a March sou'wester in 1942. It was so bad that the sea washed in the front door of our little house on the boardwalk of Atlantic Beach twice in the same night, but other than a wet floor, we had little damage. In the fall we had mullet blows, the sometimes violent shifts of wind and rain which accompanied approaching cold fronts. They usually started out with a shift of wind to the north, followed by rain and wind out of the northwest, and wound up with the wind blowing a gale from the northeast. Then of course there were the thunderstorms in the summertime. But these three kinds of storms were the only ones I knew anything about.

When I woke up that fateful morning it was already raining and the wind was picking up out of the southeast. This was strange to me 'cause we didn't have either sou'westers or mullet blows in June, and thunderstorms had thunder and lightning in them, but this blow didn't have either one, and the wind was blowing from the southeast instead of from the southwest or north.

Then one morning it came! There was no advance warning. When a storm was brewing, the cottage people on the beach usually stopped by to ask my daddy what he had heard or thought about the storm, since he was the only authority figure on the beach. But, this time I remember nobody came by 'cause they didn't have any idea that a storm was building up right off the coast. When I woke up that fateful morning it was already raining and the wind was picking up out of the southeast. This was strange to me 'cause we didn't have either sou'westers or mullet blows in June, and thunderstorms had thunder and lightning in them, but this blow didn't have either one, and the wind was blowing from the southeast instead of from the southwest or north. I ate breakfast and headed out into it. In those days I was a rambler and was allowed to roam wherever I wanted to as long as it was on Bogue Banks. The surf had gotten very rough and was pounding the beach harder than it ever had in any sou'wester I had ever seen. My daddy had been out a

long time before me, and he and the rest of the crowd who worked on the main beach had gathered in the old beach storeroom. The storeroom was on the circle of the main beach and was part of the same building which housed the ladies bathhouse and pumphouse on the ocean side and the post office and storeroom on the side next to the Circle. It was used to store soft drinks, beer, nabs, candy, and just about anything else that was sold on the main beach. The door to the storeroom was on the northwest side of the building and was protected from the wind and rain by an old drink stand that stuck out towards the street. I decided to join the crowd there and find out what was going on. When I got there I heard somebody say the storm was a hurricane -- a new and strange sounding word to me.

I soon found out about the power of a hurricane. I had always liked storms before, because when it rained, the beach sand got wet and didn't blow all over creation, especially in my face and eyes. As the evening (called afternoon now) rolled around the wind shifted to the east. I stepped out from behind the shelter of the storeroom to see how bad things were. Suddenly the wind picked up that wet beach sand from off the hills (they're called dunes now) behind the bowling alley (formerly the Idle Hour) and blowed it across the Circle. Before I could get back to the shelter of the storeroom, the sand had reached me. And, there I stood with nothing on but a t-shirt and a bathing suit. When it hit it felt like a hundred pins and needles stabbing me at the same time, burning and stinging. I felt like I was under attack by a solid hive of yellow jackets. Today, 46 years later, I can still feel that sand a-stinging! I was not fool enough to venture out again. The wind then shifted on around to the northeast, and I think ended up blowing from the northwest. By nightfall it was over. It came upon us suddenly and left almost as fast as it came, but that day I learnt in short order about the fury of a hurricane.

There was very little damage from the blow. The lights went out, of course, but even Tidewater Power and Light Co. was able to get them back on in a few hours. I thought that all the effects of the storm were over by the next day. But then, about two weeks later, my grandmother spent the night with us and, since she was a great walker, the next morning she, my mother, and I got up early and walked way down the beach to where Club Colony is today. On our way back home, just as we got about fifty yards from the house, I looked down and saw a quarter on the edge of the surf where we were walking. I grabbed it as quick as I could and started looking for more. Directly I found a dime and then a nickel! Everywhere I looked there was money! My mother and grandmother started looking too, and they began to find some. By the time we got abreast of the house we had found nearly a dollar in all. We went up to the house to get some refreshments, and I got me something to drink and rushed back to the water to look for more money. I

kept at it for most of the rest of the day, with good luck too I might add. I soon found out that money could only be found when the tide was coming in and was at a certain spot on the beach. And, it was found only in front of the main beach.

It appeared that the hurricane had washed out most of the small change that bathers had lost over the years. There no metal detectors in those days so a lot of lost money had collected there since the last hurricane in 1933.

It appeared that the hurricane had washed out most of the small change that bathers had lost over the years. There no metal detectors in those days so a lot of lost money had collected there since the last hurricane in 1933. The storm had taken this "washed out" money and had left it in a drift line along the shore. But, before the storm was over, the money had been covered up by another layer of sand. Now, two weeks later, a little lagoon had formed behind an off-shore bar and was steadily moving towards shore pushed by a gentle sou'wester. When the tide was at a certain place on the beach, the waves from the ocean and the rip current in the lagoon reached the place where the money was buried and commenced to wash it out to where you could see it. It was a real dream come true. One of the MP lifeguards told me later on that he had found fifty dollars in the past week. All told I found about five dollars, and the rest of my family found much more. By the end of the week practically everybody on the beach was looking for money. Whenever I wanted pocket change and the tide was right, all I had to do was go down to the shore and find a little. This windfall lasted about two weeks before it petered-out. I still have some of that "found money" today. But, being a "young'ern," finding money eventually became work for me, and I soon returned to my old pastime and true love - playing.

Since that time in June of 1944, I have experienced many devastating hurricanes, have been in countless sou'westers, have seen many thunder squalls come and go, and have been beat and blowed about by unnumbered mullet blows, but, in all my life, I have been mommicked and moneyed by only one -- "Money Blow"!

"When the Hurricane hit Lukens"

Patricia M. Moore (As told by Jack Mason)

Reprinted from the Raleigh News & Observer, September 9, 1979.

Oriental - Unlike this past week when reports of Hurricane David filled the air, the 126 residents of Lukens didn't know a tropical storm was bearing down on them. No one had a radio.

The first indication of trouble was the tell tale roar of a tornado. Jack Mason and his three card-playing friends looked up and saw a greenhouse, its floor and the vine that once grew beside it, swirling upwards. That was only a preview of what the early morning hours of Sept. 16, 1933, would bring to the now nonexistent fishing village of Lukens, then located on the eastern side of South River, about seven miles from Oriental.

The four youths, assuming they were in for a nor-easter, took the precaution of moving their boats and haul nets up Mulberry Creek, carefully tying the vessels from one side of the bank to the other for safekeeping. Then they resumed their card game in the cabin of one of the boats.

Mason, a retired commercial fisherman living in Oriental, was 20 years old at the time.

"Something told me before night that I ought to go home," he said. When he stepped outside the cabin, water was up to his arms in the creek that usually was four feet deep. Winds were gusting insistently. He half ran, half waded through a woods invaded by water. Normally, the place was dry.

By the time he reached his house, the tide was about the previous highwater marks left by the storm of September 3, 1913.

His mother, busy with housekeeping chores, was unaware of the intensity of the storm outside until her son came home. Then, after discussing the worsening weather conditions, he and his mother decided that both Aunt Liney Pittman and Aunt Jane Pittman and their families should come to the Mason house, which was on higher ground.

It was nearing dusk when Mason went after Aunt Liney, her daughter and two sons.

A short while later, he made his way through a thicket of 22 tall pine trees, now surrounded by water, to fetch Aunt Jane. But her family refused to leave.

Mason returned home. Then, watching the tide continue to rise, he and his mother decided he should make another effort to get Aunt Jane. Again, Mason went through the deepening water in the thicket. A second time, the family would not leave.

Midnight was approaching, and the sea was, too. A third time, Mason proceeded through the pine thicket, where the water was now waist deep. Usually, he, like everyone else, depended on kerosene lanterns for light at night. but the wind wouldn't let one stay lit. Mason didn't own a flashlight.

This time, he was accompanied by his 12-year-old cousin, Milton Pittman. They could hear each blast of wind coming.

"I could hear trees and limbs falling all around," Mason says. "I told Milton that every time we heard a tree or limb coming, to duck down in the water and maybe one of us would make it."

The cousins moved by instinct. "We weren't used to lights. I knew just how to get through there," Mason recalls.

They stopped briefly on the way at Uncle Wes' house. "He was busy trying to get his hogs and cattle upstairs in the house. Water was on the first floor, Mason remembers.

They finally got to Aunt Jane's. They were all four sitting on top of the dining room table. We broke out the window and they crawled across the table to get out. We couldn't use the front door because the wind was blowing too hard to open it," he says.

On the way out, Aunt Jane picked up an old was tub. Mason noticed but didn't have time to ask what she through she was doing. As she passed her chicken pen, Aunt Jane reached in and plucked six chickens from the rising waters and floated the tub beside her all the way to Mason's home.

Uncle Henry, her 75-year-old husband who weighed about 250 pounds was clutching a Prince Albert tobacco can.

It took the family group an hour to reach Mason's house. "Every time one of those hard gusts would come, we'd have to stop," Mason recalls.

Once inside, the 10 relatives felt they were in a boat. Angry tides, pushed to a fury by wind of approximately 100 miles per hour, swirled beneath the foundations of the house and literally made it rock.

Finally, to stop the rocking, Mason took parts of an old icebox and beat holes in the floor of the house to let trapped air and water escape so that house could settle back down on its foundation.

By then, water had risen above the windows.

"The wind and water were beating on the front door," Mason says. "We got seven or eight of us trying to hold the door. There came a big sea and it washed us to the end of the house."

A goat passed through. An old icebox floated around.

A hog was passing through the house. It was washed in from the hog pen," Mason continued. "I grabbed him and threw him in the icebox and he was the only one we had left."

By that time, Mason had learned that Uncle Henry's tobacco can contained gold. "We had a safe. I thought if the house washed away, that safe would stay here. I wanted to put Uncle Henry's money in it," Mason says. "That way, somebody would get some use from it if we didn't make it."

"He said I wasn't going to get me hands on that money -- after all three times I went to get them," Mason recalled with a smile.

Then the front porch blew off, and the wind began to howl through a large crack.

"About 2:30, the wind had come around to the northwest," he remembers. "When you'd hear the wind, you'd have to turn around to get your breath."

Faced with rising water and piercing wind, with relatives clinging to whatever turned and said, "Mama, I've done all I can. We've got some dry clothes in the attic."

That was when the family began to cry and pray.

It wasn't that they didn't want to get to a drier place. It wasn't that they didn't want dry clothes. "That was the end of it when we went up there," Mason says. "There wasn't anyplace else to go."

Upstairs, the group changed to dry clothes and waited out the rest of the night.

"About sunrise, we came back downstairs. The tide had gone down. It was just about on the ground then," Mason recalls. The wind shifted to the southwest and blew the rest of the water away.

The familiar pine thicket had heretofore hidden Aunt Jane's and Aunt Liney's houses from the Mason's view. But the morning light revealed none of the 22 pine trees were left standing.

Aunt Jane's house was gone and so was Aunt Liney's.

Out of the 26 homes in the community, 13 were left. Miraculously no human lives were lost at Lukens. "It seemed that the Lord arranged it so that everybody got to the houses that did not wash down," Mason said.

The livestock did not fare as well. "You couldn't put a hand down anywhere without touching something dead," Mason said. "We couldn't bury it all."

The cattle that survived had saved themselves by going to higher ground.

Aunt Jane lost all her chickens except for the six she took with her in the wash tub.

The Masons lost most of their 200 cattle, all the 50 to 75 hogs except the one Mason tossed into the icebox, and 100 chickens and his mother's 300-plus turkeys.

They had one pan of light bread left, only because it was placed on top of a pie safe. The morning after the storm, Mason gathered wood and built a fire, and the 10 family members shared the bread.

Three days later, a Coast Guard boat arrived with food and water. The Red Cross also came.

The hurricane had washed away parts of the school and damaged the post office and church.

At nearby Merrimom, only four out of 30 houses were left standing.

At Oriental, Vandemere, Bayboro and Arapahoe, hardly a building was left intact.

The storm destroyed about three-fourths of the mile-long Neuse River bridge at New Bern, where water was reported six feet deep in the business district.

News stories quoted E. H. Dixon, manager of Carolina Telephone and Telegraph, Co., as saying that "trees were blown down on nearly every street and telephone wires were tangled everywhere."

Winds reached 100 miles per hour at Morehead City.

At Cedar Island, only 14 of 84 houses were left standing. Close to 1,000 persons were left homeless.

Oracoke was reported covered by four feet of water at the height of the storm.

The hurricane is not listed in record books as one of the great storms of the Atlantic, like Hurricane Hazel, and it came before tropical depressions were given proper names. It is known simply as "the '33 storm," but people like Jack Mason say the name with respect.

It is the storm that lowland residents claim began the modern day erosion of shorelines. Mason's homesite in Lukens, once some 300 yards from the river, is now at the water line.

Ironically, it was not the hurricane that killed the community of Lukens. It was the closing of the public school. For a while, after all the residents had moved themselves and taken their rebuilt houses with them to new locations, a huge oak tree that measured 7 1/2 feet in diameter presided over the barren foundation. Then the tree began to rot.

"Seems like after you leave a place, the trees leave, too," Mason says.

"Hurricanes are bad," he says with finality. "About storms, all I can tell you is that you've got to do all you're gonna do before a storm hits. Now, you know if they're going to hit. Then we didn't even have a flashlight."

(This article was brought to **The Mailboat** by Eloise Blair, a member of the Pittman family.)

"Little Island," Continued from Page 17

March 15, 1945 - "Our Father" was born at Cape Lookout near the Light house and was named "James Bryant Guthrie." As I understand he grew to be quite a husky young fellow, some how, and in some way he attained a first class education, especially for that day, he taught school quite a lot there on Cape Lookout, and too, his offsprings are all proud to state beyond a doubt that he knew his God, he was a Christian man to the day he died.

In later years he proved to be a sailor who could, and did sail the high seas in sail vessels. For so many years he sailed the coast from Jacksonville up to Boston which was the usual trading points in that day. First he sailed the two topmast schooner named the "Martha Thomas" and Later he took the "T. M. Thomas" both owned by Capt. Tom Thomas of Beaufort, NC. The latter on which he was come up North from Florida a storm struck him and a topsail halyard block gave way and struck him, but making it ok, further down the coast he was stricken with small pox and had to be taken in port at Charleston, SC where he stayed till the doctors made him well. "Our Father Who Art in Heaven, Hallowed by Thy Name."

In his declining years he retired from his sea going, and held a continuous position with one Mr. Latham from New Jersey who owned some sort of establishment at Cape Lookout. On October 9th, 1886 he went to his death leaving with us children \$100.00 in money. Myself being eighteen months old at the time. He gained the greatest victory that man can expect to gain, he was a Christian!

To be Continued!

"The Sound of War"

Madge Guthrie

"War" ... the most awful three-letter word in the English language. Once again we're drawn into this terrible sound -- the height of "man's inhumanity to man." Seems there has always been some "big guy" taking over the "little guy" to conquer more. Occasionally someone comes forth to try and halt this process; I like to believe this is the part American conducts. But whether or not we agree on who's right or who's wrong, we are nonetheless caught in the "sound of war."

Like many others I was watching a TV news program when the news came. My first reaction was, "Oh no, I'd prayed and hoped it wouldn't come to this." My mind went back to my first awareness of war. I was a child when it came then. It was Monday morning, December 8, 1941. I was riding into "town" with my family and we picked-up a hitchhiker. (In those days you didn't leave anyone standing on the side of the road.) He began talking about a small strange country named Japan who had bombed Americans in someplace called Hawaii, and that our President had declared war. I'm sure I'd heard the word "war" before because all of Europe had been at war for a long time. But this time it gave me a chilly, scary feeling and I sat perched quietly on the edge of my seat. After this our nation was drawn not only into the Pacific conflict but also the European.

The first year I recall some of the childish feelings ... "annoyance" - large oil slicks came in Beaufort Bar and Barden's Inlet, covering the shore and keeping us from our favorite swimming holes; "excitement" - watching the glow of ships burning offshore from my Granny's upstairs porch; "fear" - blackouts when we kept our windows covered and stayed inside while we often heard military trucks rumble down the roads. Many times we'd hear airplanes followed by sirens for a blackout and we would all freeze with fear. Years later we learned that many times during those blackouts wounded seamen from torpedoed tankers and supply ships were brought through here, as well as Germans from submarines.

The childish emotions changed as the war continued and we became more aware of the real tragedies of war. Patriotism ran high. There were gold stars and flags in the window of most every home and we became accustomed to rationing of such things as sugar, meats, fats (this is where margarine showed-up ... it came in a large white block with a packet of yellow coloring to be mashed-in!). Iron and metals were collected for the war effort. (I pretty near got myself "switched" for giving one of Mother's flat-irons to the "iron man!")

There was a military encampment on Shell Point for awhile which found all the bigger (or older) girls keeping watch on those good-looking guys in uniform. Over at Cape Lookout the Coast Guard and Lighthouse Service were greatly expanded and a large Army group began an operation there, lining the beach with gun turrets (which due to erosion can be seen at the Cape today). The lookout towers which the army had built stood for years after the war.

But though all of it, the telegrams were the hardest. "We regret to inform you ----" ... telling us the ones we loved were either KIA or MIA. Stories of awful atrocities were brought back from both Europe and the Pacific. The years have dulled the scars, but for many of us, they're still there.

As the weeks of today's trouble continue, let us all hope and pray that these "sounds" will be silenced as quickly and honorably as possible ... "God Bless America, Again."

Skiffs, Continued from Page 6 ...

protruding handle. Beginning in the mid 60's the wooden bailers were replaced by plastic containers, generally Clorox bottles, with the bottom and part of one side cut out.

Bailing involved much more than just scooping up water and pouring it over the side. Experienced bailers (the men or boys who used bailers were themselves called bailers) could remove water from a skiff much faster than the modern bilge-pumps that since have taken their place. A fast and steady sweeping motion kept at least one bale of water suspended in air all the time. From a distance it might have appeared that a large suction pump was spitting a steady stream of water from the bilge of the boat.

One trick that every bailer soon discovered was that bailing was much easier, and more efficient, when done with the wind. It didn't do much good to throw a gallon of water into the air if a blustering southwester returned most of it to the boat (and the bailer's face.)

Oaring, or "polling" the skiff was another art that was much refined by those who used skiffs on a regular basis. Working from the leeward stern, the oarsman could move a skiff fast enough to throw a real wake. Two oarsman working together

could raise a "cattail." Before gasoline powered boats became more common, local watermen polled their skiffs everywhere along the Island shore. Some even "shoved" as far as Beaufort or Davis' Island. Luther Willis became renowned for his oaring skills and speed. It was said that he could poll to Beaufort faster than others could go in a sailskiff.

Most Island boys, including me, got their first real exposure to boating in a skiff. The skiff became their training ground for setting nets and raking for clams as well as for polling itself. Being able to shove a skiff in four different directions without ever changing places was very much a right of passage for any youngster who hoped one day to be real waterman.

But now-a-days its hard to find a real skiff any more. Fishermen now drive their pickup to the harbor and jump into their boat from a dock or wharf. The few skiffs that remain are almost exclusively reserved for channel-netters and long haulers who use them to transport long nets and staffs.

The boats all tied up together at Refuge harbor may make a postcard scene to someone who wants a picture of the fishing boats at rest for the Holidays. But to at least one observer, they serve as yet another reminder of way of life that is passing away all too soon.

School Boat, Continued from Page 10 ...

There were only a few minor repairs such as adding boats to the back of the pews to form desks, replacing a few window panes, installing a tin heater, driving a pump and acquiring a teacher's desk, blackboard, and chalk. With these things completed, the school was ready.

The Gibbs girls (Ruth and Annie Mae) were our first teachers. For those fortunate enough to have them for teachers, we know they were good teachers who did not "spare the rod and spoil the child." Other who came after them were Miss Eva (Willis) Johnson, Mrs. Irene Stewart and Miss Lutie Chadwick. These last two teachers were from "The Straits" and rode the Mailboat to Lennoxville on Mondays, boarding with local people during the week, then returning home on Saturdays. These were all good teachers, and the children learned a lot from their instructions.

The last teacher for the children of Lennoxville was Miss Abeta Willis from Atlantic. She boarded with local folks during the school term, going home only on special occasions. "Miss Beatie" as she let us lovingly address her, was an excellent teacher and one of the nicest persons I ever knew. She later married one of the local boys and became the mother of Charlie C. Lewis, Letha Lewis Davis and the late Pearl L. Hunnings.

The next school term which was the fall of 1922, the children from our village were sent by boat to Beaufort Graded School in Beaufort for consolidation with other county schools. We boarded a "School Boat" for the three mile trip to town to attend school, leaving home around seven o'clock in the morning

and arriving around eight o'clock. We always tied up at Mr. Charlie Hill's dock, went through his store and ran or skated the two blocks to the school building (which for me was at the Old Town Hall where the fifth and sixth grades were held). Two terms later, we were privileged to attend the Beaufort High School.

A ritual I shall always remember was the opening ceremonies each morning in front of the Flag Pole. The students lined up at the bugle call and stood at attention while the band played, "The Star Spangled Banner" and the Flag was raised. Then, to a march song, we marched inside the building to the Auditorium where morning devotions were held. Then we would sing such patriotic songs as, "America," "Ho for Carolina," "Maryland, My Maryland," "Carry Me Back to Old Virginia," and others. Then we quietly marched to our respective rooms. Such teachers as Miss Lena Duncan, Miss Lessie Arington, Miss Annie Morton, Miss Gladys Chadwick, Miss Iva Modlin, and others will always be remembered.

By the school term of 1927, the road to Lennoxville had been paved and the children attended school by bus. My class was the first to graduate from the NEW Beaufort High School, located on the site when the Beaufort Elementary School now stands.

Book Reviews

Whaling on the North Carolina Coast

M. B. and Sallie W. Simpson, Archives and History, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 1990

The above titled monograph is an examination of whaling along the Atlantic Coast of North Carolina from its early colonial beginnings through its cessation shortly after the turn of the twentieth century, a two hundred and fifty year period.

It is thoroughly researched and annotated. The illustrations and maps are informative, complementing the text nicely. The names of a multitude of New England and New York whaling ships are recited, a valuable research resource. The relationship of vessel-based whaling to shore-based whaling is explained, as is the relationship of the North Carolina fisheries (shore and vessel based) to North American whaling as a whole. (Those who question the use of the term "fishery" for whaling may refer to *Moby Dick*, "A whale is a spouting fish with a horizontal tale.")

This monograph is the starting point for any examination of the rise and fall of the American whaling industry and the careers of those who participated.

The academic writing style is somewhat tedious. Fortunately, this is redeemed near the end of the treatise.

Beginning on page 37, there is a grand recapitulation of the colorful local (i.e. Shackleford Banks) custom of "naming" the whales caught. Many of the names are listed along with the reasons for the names. (The "Cold Sunday Whale" was caught on a Sunday "so cold that flying ducks froze solid in flight.") It is the most complete compilation of the "named" whales this reviewer has seen or heard in over sixty years.

On page 40 begins the story of the chase and skill of the locally famous "Mayflower Whale" as reported by the late H. H. Brimley, Director of the North Carolina Museum of Natural History in Raleigh.

These episodes hint at the spirit of competition among the crews, the excitement of the hunt, the camaraderie and bonding among competitors after the contest, and the participation of whole communities in bringing off a successful venture, the benefits flowing to all.

In their final summation, the authors observe:

"North Carolina shore whaling was apparently never more than a minor activity, mostly to provide supplemental income to fishermen during a slack period in their regular occupation. Compared to the complex business ventures of New England whaling, the industry in North Carolina was rather insignificant as an economic phenomenon."

To explain why shore-based whaling continued on Shackleford Banks long after pure economics would have dictated its demise, the authors comment:

"Perhaps one factor contributing to this persistence was suggested by Brimley (H. H. Brimley, Raleigh), who stated, 'I have always believed that the thrills and excitement accompanying the chase and capture of these monsters of the deep had a great deal to do with the regularity with which those hardy coast dwellers made ready for the chase year after year as the days of spring rolled around.'"

"Well, of course!" Any fool can work; the challenge is to "have fun" at it. The Ca'e Bankers did. Whaling was their "Superbowl!"

Read the little booklet. 'Twould be worth \$3.00 even if it weren't any good. It's "goodness" is an extra.

Josiah Bailey

Booknotes

"Research continues on the Life-Saving Service in Carteret County"

Sonny and Jenny Williamson are currently working on the history of the U. S. Life-Saving Service which patrolled our lonely beaches from January 1897 until January 1915. 1915 was when the U. S. Coast Guard was established and assumed control of both the Life-Saving Stations and the Revenue Cutter Service. The book will be confined to the five stations located in Carteret County.

They are in search of any related materials including pictures, discharges, service records, medals, citations, or stories. If you have information that would be helpful to this project, please contact them by writing to P O Box 184, Marshallberg, NC 28553 -- or by calling them at (919) 729-7871.

As the stories unfold, several of them will appear here in Sonny's column in The Eastern Weekly and here in The Mailboat. The following is from the proposed introduction:

As early as 1837 the U. S. Congress authorized the use of revenue cutters to patrol the coast during periods of bad weather. Eleven years later in 1848 they voted to build eight stations along the coast of New Jersey, and in 1871, following a winter of several tragic marine disasters, they voted to establish additional life-saving stations with paid crews.

As the service was expanded, Long Island and Rhode Island were included and the following year Cape Cod and Block Island were added. In 1873 additional stations were established in Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Virginia and North Carolina. The eight stations allocated to North Carolina were all built north of Cape Hatteras.

Although these stations were authorized and funded, they were not properly manned until two tragic shipwrecks caused a public outcry which even politicians could not ignore. On November 24, 1877, the steamer HURON stranded near Nags Head with the loss of ninety-eight and the following January 31 another steamer the METROPOLIS grounded at Currituck Beach with an additional eighty-five lives lost.

As a result of an investigation following these disasters the Act of June 18, 1878 established the U. S. Life-Saving Service as a separate part of the Treasury Department with full bureau status.

Still, it was not until December the 15th, 1887 that William H. Gaskill was appointed as the first keeper of Cape Lookout Station. The following January, a crew of seven surfmen were hired to serve under him and the much needed local life-saving service officially became a reality in Carteret County.

At Portsmouth it was not until July 15, 1893 that the Secretary of the Treasury gave permission to use a portion of the old Marine Hospital grounds to build the new station. On June 24, 1894 the station was complete and left in charge of Watchman A. J. Syron. On the following August 22, Ferdinand G. Terrell was appointed as first keeper but due to a misunderstanding with Syron, he did not assume his duties until October 26th. Terrell had a crew of six.

On January 3, 1896, Alexander Moore was appointed as the first keeper of Core Banks and the station was officially opened the following April 3, 1896 with a crew of six. The station was located halfway between Cape Lookout and Portsmouth on a 42.5 acre track which the government had obtained from Charles and Louisa Mason of Atlantic.

The stations at Fort Macon and Bogue Inlet would not open for several more years.

The keepers, who were all veteran surfmen, were responsible for hiring and training their own crews, to be chosen from local men under 45 years of age, who were already familiar with the boat handling. The surfmen were ranked from number one upwards with the number one surfman being the best qualified to act in the keeper's place during his absences.

During the harsh winter months, December through April, the stations were authorized to hire one additional man known as the "winter man" to avoid confusing him with the regular crew.

These early surfmen signed a contract or "Article of Engagement" good for one year. He could then be dismissed by the keeper for sufficient cause.

Along with a salary of \$30 per month (\$50 during the active season) the Carteret County surfmen were guaranteed weeks of total boredom punctuated by moments of unbelievable danger and stark, gut-wrenching terror. No matter which, they always met the challenge ...

"Plenty of Room - I Remember Daddy"

Eloise Nelson Pigott

(Reprinted from "Straits United Methodist Church Newsletter," June 1982)

"Daddy, give me \$10.00 and the car keys: I want to go to a movie ..." a request that is familiar and routine to today's youth. However, in the later 30's and early 40's, this wasn't the sound we heard on the Gloucester shore. The sound was more often than not, "Capt. Charlie, may we go to the show with you tonight?" The answer was always the same: "Yes, you may go, come on I have 'plenty of room.'" This was in response to the numerous neighborhood kids who made the request. When we returned on Saturday night we were tired, sleepy and happy. The same question was asked over and over again, and the same response in Daddy's soft voice that always held a trace of a chuckle, "I have plenty of room."

An explanation is probably due, because I can hear you say that must have been some car to have held such a crowd! Well, we walked from our home in Gloucester to Marshallberg to the show on Saturday night. This was in the days when we still went to the "show" -- movies came much later. Our path took us through the woods, along the banks of Sleep Creek, over a dusty, unpaved road, until finally we arrived at the theater. Singing birds, squirrels, and rabbits accompanied us on our trip. I am sure there were snakes watching our progress as well, but we chose not to think about them. You will have to remember that these were the days before the miracle spray "Off" and mosquitoes and redbugs were in abundance. When our group arrived, we ate deliciously hot, fresh popcorn and settled down for the entertainment. Looking back, I can see that Daddy probably thought the show owner, Mr. Charlie Willis, was in cahoots with us children because the feature always ended with the car hanging over the cliff or the damsel fleeing for her life with a broad caption on the screen CONTINUED NEXT WEEK. Each Saturday night the same question was asked, "May we go to your next week?" Always he had the same response -- he had room for all. He probably resembled the Pied Piper with children of all ages and sizes following behind, and on the return trip, Jerry, the baby, was usually asleep in his arms.

In attempting to write this article, I have been struck by the fact that "plenty of room" is probably as great a tribute as any I could offer my daddy. He had plenty of room for love, laughter, and happiness. What do you say that a widowed man left with four young children, ranging in ages from nine years to twenty-five months, had to be happy about? What did he know about "plenty of room"? While he never had much money or many of the material things of life, we knew we were loved.

Eric, Ellen, and I can remember well-meaning relatives and friends counseling and urging Daddy to put us in an orphanage. "You can't look after four young children and work too" was heard time and time again. We have repeated the story so many

times that even Jerry, who was a baby at this time, can relate Daddy's final word on the subject. I too, can hear his soft but firm voice, "There will be no orphanage for the Nelson kids. I am keeping them all together and at home. There's 'plenty of room.'" Thanks to a dear Aunt Nellie who loved and cared for Jerry during school time, Daddy was able to manage very well. How we looked forward eagerly to the weekend and summer-time when the baby was home with us! Also, Cousin Charlie and Cousin Fannie and their sons stayed with us one summer. We stayed together and there was always room for all of us.

Daddy was a good Christian man who practiced his religion and served his Lord on a daily basis. Whenever I hear the words of the hymns, "Jesus, Savior, Pilot Me" and "The Rock that is Higher than I," Daddy is a little bit closer in my thoughts and memories.

My hope and prayer would be that my own children and grandchildren could remember me as always having "plenty of room" for family, friends, love, happiness and a place for the Lord in my heart.

Additions/Corrections

Please make the following additions/corrections in your Fall 1990 issue. Our thanks to Ellen Fulcher Cloud who brought these necessary changes to our attention. Our apologies for any confusion.

p. 18 (Charlie Mac's Truck should have been ...) Charlie Caswell McWilliams ran the mail and passengers to Hatteras in this truck.

p. 18 (Garrish's Store ...) was Will Willis (Jack Willis) store; Irvin Garrish was running it.

p. 19 (The information included with Charlie McWilliams picture referred to Charlie Small McWilliams, uncle of the Charlie C. McWilliams included in the photo.) The photo is of Charlie Caswell McWilliams (1892-1972). The confusion obviously comes with the fact there were two Charlie McWilliams in the same Ocracoke family.

p. 19 (The Core Banks Coast Guard Station could have been Hatteras Inlet. Does anyone know for sure?)

p. 34 For reasons we're not sure, the following lines were omitted from the transcription of pension records for the Fulford Family. Please makes these additions to your notes:

... day of April last. Married STEPHEN FULFORD March 12, 1797.

STEPHEN FULFORD died 2-4-??

End of film #805-342

Hill's View

Eddie Hill

To think back upon my school days is to recall a time of sheer happiness, as days were filled with athletics, friends and endless dreams. You see, that is the wonderful thing about those formative years, those school days. At that point in life, the sky is the limit and the future holds in store whatever you would have it to.

Unfortunately, for most people, with the ending of our formal education also comes the ending of all but the most feasible of dreams. Responsibilities take the place of futuristic plans and time constraints keep us solidly nailed down to reality. But, oh, how I could dream back then as I envisioned all sorts of glory and adventure.

I was never one to say, "This is what I want to do when I grow up." For me, career choices were as plentiful as leaves on a tree and my mind was apt to change and fluctuate as rapidly as a leaf falling to the ground and caught in a swirl of wind. It's funny, but no matter what the occupation was for that particular day, the common denominator was money and glamour. Leave

the desk jobs and faces in crowds for someone else, I was sure that my future held much more.

It is funny how time has a way of changing how you look at things. Ten years ago, I saw my family's country store as a necessary evil of sorts. It was a place that summoned me out of bed every Sunday morning at 6:15. It was a place that kept my father occupied seven days a week and a place where Irish potatoes were known to rot and require sorting through. In even the wildest of my daydreams back then I would never have imagined the feelings that I feel today some ten years later.

Now I realize what an invaluable learning tool -- an education -- that old store was. Any public relations skills that I possess today can be directly attributed to that store and to the wonderful man that ran it. Working there gave me an opportunity to see firsthand what the business world was all about. I was able to learn bits and pieces about all kinds of trades, as the men looking for a certain tool or part would explain what it was for and how to use it. I came to know the proper etiquette of hanging out around the old kerosene stove, when it was okay to speak and when to set back and listen to the older and wiser men. I was able to hear stories that spanned generations and was given the opportunity to see my heritage come alive through these many old salts that came in for an ice-cold drink from the drink-box.

That old store and the occupants within her weathered old walls were my greatest teachers. That store taught me something far more important than what you could find in a book. That store taught me life in the purest sense. It's funny, but to this day one of my fondest memories is to think back to delivering a grocery order to one of the trawlers early on a Sunday morning. The smell of the air, the beauty in the morning sun on the sparkling water and the feel of stepping on the deck of the intriguing vessel are as vivid now as if only yesterday.

But just as childhood dreams melt away into the reality of life, old country stores have a way of fading away too. People

want convenience and modernization. They want to pay less and get more, and unfortunately, that's not what old country stores are all about. But, in an area that has not yet succumbed to tourism, where people still work hard for every cent they earn, there really is no one to blame.

I am saddened by the thought that my children will probably never experience this unique place called "Winston Hill & Sons." They'll see pictures and I will try to tell them what a neat place it was, but it will

not be the same. They won't be able to get a Pepsi-Cola out of the drinkbox and see the ice shooting up when they pop open the cap. They won't be able to roast peanuts on top of the ancient kerosene potbellied stove, nor will they ever deliver a sack of groceries or clean out a bunch of nasty rotten potatoes.

But to my grandfather Winston and to my father Roderick, here's a toast. For all of the hours that you put into her, it was well worth it, for as long as there is an Atlantic, people will remember Winston's. It was a part of the community as well as the family. But for me, it was by far my greatest teacher and I am certain, it was its most grateful pupil.



"Winston's" Store

The Mailboat is a publication of Coastlore, PO Box 3, Harkers Island, NC 28531 (919) 728-4644; Editors: Karen Willis Ampsacher and Joel G. Hancock. Our thanks to all who have contributed time and talents to this issue of **The Mailboat**. Published by Coastlore, **The Mailboat** is available by subscription and in local bookstores, gift shops, and libraries across the NC. We welcome your help in encouraging new subscriptions and contributions to our collection of local history.

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Stern Line

This back page marks not only the conclusion of this winter issue of **The Mailboat**, but the last edition of our first year. Last year this time we were making plans for the first "spring issue," wondering if we could bring together enough "good stuff" to encourage others to read, write, and remember the days before bridges and telephones. Now, as we look back over the past four issues, a Christmas collection, two "Get-Togethers," and many personal phones calls and notes, we are amazed, thrilled, and excited with the response. Our subscriptions have grown to over 600 with many others being reached through in bookstores, libraries, and "pass-around's" among family members. Regardless of how **The Mailboat** reaches you, we welcome your interest and thank you for your support of what we hope is "just the beginning" of many years to come.

Our new season of **The Mailboat** offers new challenges. With the wealth of ideas, stories, and pictures that have come to us we are looking for ways to publish this material so that you, and the many others who will read the publications in years to come, will have the opportunity to enjoy and learn from all of them. We are working toward grant applications and sponsorships which you will hear more about in April. **The Mailboat** is now classified as a non-profit organization, allowing monetary donations to be considered as tax-exempt. We welcome your support with this new avenue of obtaining financial backing for publishing **The Mailboat**. We believe your interest, concern, and confidence in what **The Mailboat** symbolizes will encourage you to contribute to these efforts in whatever way you can. By working together, **WE** can nurture this publication into becoming a significant effort in the process of recording our local history, in a time when "change" and "progress" continue to alter the way of life **The Mailboat** is recording.

Again and again, our THANKS to you -- and especially to those of you who are subscribers -- for those subscriptions continue to be the "base" of our operation. Your commitment to **The Mailboat** is "what makes this publication work." Whenever we get discouraged or wonder "why we're doing this," a phone call or note reminds us that **YOU REALLY DO CARE**. Our personal thanks to you, and our invitation to renew your subscription, join us at the "Get-Together's," send us your family or community histories and stories, join our list of sponsors, or just write us a note and let us know what you'd like to read ... We want this to be a "joint effort" ... of readers and writers, photographers and collectors, natives and newcomers ... all working together to "preserve the heritage of Carolina's Coast."

Kam Joel

Don't Forget ...

March 18 - Deadline for the spring issue ... We will still be accepting "school" stories, hurricane stories, and Mailboat notes as always ... and especially **BASEBALL STORIES** ... pictures, newspaper clippings, etc. This issue could be the **BEST** one yet!

April 13 and 14 - **COASTAL CELEBRATION**, Kerr Scott Bldg., State Fair Grounds, Raleigh, NC (The Mailboat, the Decoy Guild, the Maritime Museum, CCHS, Ocracoke Preservation Society, Friends of Portsmouth ... "All the home folks" will be there ... Hope **YOU** are too!

April 20 - **SPRING GET-TOGETHER**, Harkers Island Elementary School, HI, NC ("Baseball - The Way It Used to Be" ... Food, entertainment, exhibits ... baseballs stories "tall and true" ... **BE THERE!** (The reservation list has already begun!)

SPRING means all kinds of programs and events throughout the county ... We'll include **d** places in the next issue.



Coastline is a network of writers, historians, teachers, collectors, folklorists, artists, crafters, and preservationists who are keenly interested in the cultural heritage of North Carolina's coast. Its purpose is to record and share the unique character of this area, its people, and its maritime history and traditions.

Together we hope to establish a resource for anyone seeking to learn more about the distinct culture of Carolina's coastal region.

"The Mailboat," Coastline's quarterly newsletter, will provide a means of exchange for all whose interest in this area reaches not only to the past, but also is concerned about the future of this changing lifestyle. It will include reviews from local books, features from contributing writers and students, a calendar of cultural events, and information on preservation efforts within the communities of Carolina's coast. A subscription will also include a 10% discount on all purchases from Coastline's catalog of books, prints, and collectibles.

Join us as we strive to keep the real beauty of coastal Carolina alive. It is our belief that those who genuinely care about the coast of North Carolina—the people, their lifestyles, the environment—can preserve and protect this culture from the changes taking place. We can hold on to the things that make Carolina's coast a uniquely beautiful place. May all of us—natives, newcomers, residents, and visitors—share with one another our love for this truly special place.

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